Title: Parental involvement behaviours and attainment: student perceptions in FE

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Abstract

Research into parental involvement and links with attainment have been well documented for young children. However, parental influences for FE college-aged (16+) students have rarely been investigated in the UK. The project was based on investigating student perceptions of parental involvement within one FE college in South East England, and as such represented a case study. It involved 240 level three learners. The FE college at the focus of this project is clear through its "Parental Involvement Strategy Document" that parental engagement directly influences student attainment. However, this research project challenged this assumption and investigated student perceptions of parental involvement in respect to attainment. The project used mixed-methods to accomplish four aims. These were:

1. To investigate students' perceptions of Parental Involvement Behaviours (PIB) regarding its influence on attainment and to identify similarities and differences between students' perceptions and college policy/practice and inspectorate views.

2. To examine associations between student outcomes (UCAS points) and both a) reported PIB and b) the factors of student age, gender, ethnicity, cultural capital and course.

3. To identify if students of different ages, ethnic group, gender and course respond differently to questions about their PIB and, if so, whether the difference in response to Likert scale items is statistically significant or not.

4. To establish whether the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the investigation of student perceptions of PIB discovers distinct models of student

experiences and, if so, whether these reflect the hypothesised categories of DAPSS (Directive, Authoritarian, Parenting Support Style), PAPSS (Passive, Affable Parenting Support Style), NEAV (Negative Expectations, Aspirations and Values) and PEAV (Positive Expectations, Aspirations and Values) (or not) and also whether these models have an association with attainment (or not).

Students voiced appreciation for independence and autonomy in relation to ownership for learning in FE and the project found that intrinsic motivation was more likely to associate with grades than external factors (such as parental involvement). Although there were individual PIB that appeared to associate with student attainment (respect, trust, high expectations and aspirations) this relationship is likely to be more complex since when these behaviours were grouped together as a model of experience (called 'Clarified Independence') the association with attainment was less apparent.

Additionally, the idea of 'causation' and the 'reactive hypothesis' are deemed important when referring to high expectations and aspirations, since parental behaviours are likely to reflect prior student performance and so the link between high expectations and high attainment is more complex than it first appears. The project concludes that many parental behaviours are displayed as a result of previous student performance and so challenges the assumption that these parental behaviours can influence attainment directly, as has been reported in previous projects. Instead of devising parenting 'styles' as has been observed in previous research, the project presents a theory relating to 'layers of influence' in relation to different parental behaviours where six 'models of student experience' (MoSE) are highlighted for FE college students. This theory has been devised from a culmination of quantitative data and qualitative findings, which have been triangulated to demonstrate a holistic view of the complex patterns in relation to students and their perceptions of PIB.

Overall, parental experiences in early childhood are more likely to have a bearing on and pave the way for influential factors in relation to high attainment, (which centres on students'

intrinsic motivation) rather than individual parental behaviours at college-stage. Additionally, the college provides mixed-messages in relation to parental involvement through its strategy document and its prospectus. There is also a mis-match between college policy and student perceptions surrounding expectations for parental involvement and its influences. A minority of students experience neglectful parental behaviours and voice their appreciation for positive connections with college tutors, who often offer emotional support in place of the parents/carers.

Declaration of authorship

"I, Judith Darnell, declare that this thesis (and the work presented in it) is my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. [Attainment and Parental Involvement Behaviours: Student Perceptions in FE]

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

3. Where I have cited the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

6. Some of the author's ideas stated in the document (DAPSS, PAPSS) have been published in the IFL magazine prior to submission of this thesis as this piece built on work from an earlier project, but this has clearly been stated and referenced

Name of candidate: Judith Darnell

Signature: 

Date: 13/12/2018

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Publications/conference presentations

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Darnell, J. A. and Wolstencroft, P. (2018) 'Investigator Greed, Bi-paradigmatic combinationism, and Pragmatic Approaches in Mixed-Methods Research: The Influences for Research Choices', *The 6th CES Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference: 'Education in Unequal Societies'* University of Warwick, 5th May 2018

Darnell, J. A. and Wolstencroft, P. (2018) *The best of both worlds: pragmatism, personality, investigator greed, self-identity and the multi-skills set in the choice of mixed methods. Available at:* http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/107723/7/WRAP-best-both-worlds-pragmatism-personality-investigator-Wolstencroft-2018.pdf *[Accessed on 04/09/2018]*

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Explanation	Definition
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council	BTEC is the name of a course which leads to a qualification (now awarded by the Edexcel exam board) which are usually vocational
CFA	Categorical Factor Analysis	A tool used to reduce the dimensionality of categorised data to create groups of items called factors
DAPSS	Directive Authoritarian Parenting Support Style	This predefined style of parenting is characterised by a relationship in which the parent strives to remain in control of their child's actions or seeks to manage or observe the learning process and has a somewhat pressurised pedantic approach.
DQS	Director of Quality and Standards	The DQS is a senior manager at the college who creates and modifies college policy and is responsible for student outcomes across the college
EoM	Elements of Motivation (diagram) Figure 4.5	A diagram created in response to findings in the current project which indicates the most influential intrinsic and extrinsic factors which are seen to contribute to student motivation
FE	Further Education	FE colleges provide technical, academic, vocational and professional training and education for young people and adults from levels 1-3 (and sometimes HE courses which cover levels 4-5)

IASO	Independence/ Autonomy in Student Ownership (diagram) Figure 4.6	A diagram created in response to findings in the current project which highlights the different and most widely voiced influences that can contribute to student independence and autonomy which leads to ownership for learning
LoID	Layers of Influence Diagram See Figure 4.7	The overall theory shown in a diagram (created in response to findings in the current project) which reviews all the different influences that students experience. These influences are shown in layers (horizontal) and are affected by different models of student experience (MoSE)
MoSE	Models of Student Experience	The MoSE are shown in the LoID (above) when organising student experiences into 6 models. These are: 'Dismissed', 'Headstrong', 'Clarified Independence', 'Supposed Independence', 'Authoritised PEAV' and 'Authoritised NE-PAV'
NEAV	Negative Expectations, Aspirations and Values	This predefined style of parenting reflects parents/carers who fail to encourage their child to aspire to particular outcomes or careers. They do not show value for education or expect their children to attain highly
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation	A body which regulates assessments (examinations and qualifications) in England
PAPSS	Passive Affable Parenting Support Style	This predefined style of parenting reflects parents/carers who offer gentle encouragement and mild guidance. It emphasises verbal exchanges instead of kinaesthetic (hands on) approaches and its placidity allows the child to

		perceive that the parent-child relationship is on the same level in terms of academic power
PEAV	Positive Expectations, Aspirations and Values	This predefined style of parenting is reflective of parents who communicate high expectations, aspirations and values to their children through discussion of careers or general attainment
PIB	Parental Involvement Behaviour(s) (see Table 3.2)	The current project has developed a set of 24 PIB statements which were created to capture student perception of parental involvement through agreement or disagreement on a Likert Scale. These statements reflect the different things that parents might be doing in the home in relation to supporting with college work and attainment.
RD	Related Domains (diagram) See Figure 4.4	This diagram categorises the most frequently voiced influences for students' attainment and success at college and includes elements outside of parental involvement
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service	A service which provides a route to further study and manages applications and entry requirements. UCAS points relate to the entry requirements for particular courses and are used as a common currency in education in England.

Chapter One: Introduction: Setting the context

1.1 Aims of the study

This study had four aims which were:

1. To investigate students' perceptions of Parental Involvement Behaviours (PIB) regarding their influence on attainment and to identify similarities and differences between students' perceptions and college policy/practice and inspectorate views.
2. To examine associations between student outcomes (UCAS points) and both a) reported PIB and b) the factors of student age, gender, ethnicity, cultural capital and course.
3. To identify if students of different ages, ethnic group, gender and course respond differently to questions about their PIB and, if so, whether the difference in response to Likert scale items is statistically significant or not.
4. To establish whether the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the investigation of student perceptions of PIB discovered distinct models of student experiences and, if so, whether these reflected the hypothesised categories of DAPSS (Directive, Authoritarian, Parenting Support Style), PAPSS (Passive, Affable Parenting Support Style), NEAV (Negative Expectations, Aspirations and Values) and PEAV (Positive Expectations, Aspirations and Values) (or not) and also whether these models have an association with attainment (or not).

Through four main research questions (outlined in Chapter Three), this study explored associations between 'Parental Involvement Behaviours' (PIB) (as perceived and reported by the students) and educational outcomes, whilst considering age, gender, ethnicity and course (subject studied) for learners who attended a Further Education (FE) College and studied for a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) level three qualification (equivalent to A levels and equated to UCAS points). The study additionally sought to gather

both quantitative and qualitative data using a mixed methods approach. As well as exploring associations between the factors above quantitatively, the study investigated student perceptions of PIB qualitatively using three tools (questionnaires, focus groups and interviews). Students were asked to directly comment on whether types of PIB were likely to have an effect on their college outcomes and whether PIB changed in response to formative assessment results throughout their time on the course.

The project focussed on PIB exhibited in the home (as opposed to college-parent relations) as reported by the students. PIB refers to the behaviours that parents/carers demonstrate when supporting their children through aspects of practical support such as giving advice, reading work or discussing concepts with students and emotional support such as voicing their questions, comments, opinions and values (i.e. expectations and aspirations for students' achievement and effort). Visible parental behaviours as perceived by the students themselves were of most significance since receipt of PIB by students was considered to have more impact than investigating how the PIB was intended from the perspective of the parents.

1.2 Rationale for undertaking the research study

Since the introduction of school league tables in 1992, the UK government has communicated the importance of qualifications for the UK workforce (Leckie and Goldstein, 2016; DfE, 2016). Gaining recognised qualifications is likely to prevent youth unemployment (Foster, 2005 and Wolf, 2011) and social exclusion (Foster, 2005). Therefore, investigating factors that may associate with or affect attainment should be of prime concern for students, parents/carers, educators, FE and HE (Higher Education) institutions and the wider society. Family context has been noted as a key factor when considering children's academic achievement (Schulting, Malone and Dodge, 2005; Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Chang, Choi and Kim, 2015) and therefore exploring potential associations between PIB and student academic outcomes is important. As can be seen in Chapter Two, parental involvement has been noted as being fundamental to supporting students to achieve their qualifications, but

there is some disagreement in literature about what kinds of involvement are helpful for learners of different ages. Tickle (2009) asserted:

"It doesn't take a PhD to realise that the more that parents are involved with their child's education, the better will be the end result..." (Tickle, 2009, online).

This statement may be viewed by many as 'common sense' and indeed for most educators Vygotsky's (1978) 'Zone of Proximal Development' principle (where learning is supported in order that the student can climb higher on the learning ladder) will resonate with Tickle's statement. However, Tickle's assertion is not underpinned by research involving students over the age of sixteen and therefore the notion of parental involvement for this age group may not be as simple as quoted above.

Interest in parental involvement also stems from the researcher's work as a lecturer at a college of FE. The college in question often attempts to make links with and engage parents/carers in their children's education at age 16+ with little success. Parents' evenings and college reports are seen to be integral to ensuring that students' parents/carers are supporting them in appropriate ways and this is viewed by the institution to be crucial for student academic success. Creating a link between home and school with the assumption that parents need (and want) to be involved in their children's learning has proven difficult as illustrated by less than 15 percent of attendance at a parents' evening in 2015, prior to the start of the study. Student age is likely to affect how home-college involvement is perceived. Indeed, much research exists that supports the notion that positive family-school relationships are a predictor of achievement for *school*-aged children (e.g. Hill and Craft, 2003; Domina, 2005; Schulting, Malone and Dodge, 2005; Chang, Choi and Kim, 2015; Hampden-Thompson and Galindo, 2016). However, the researcher's experience since 2010 working in FE has identified that relationships between parents and *college* often appear to be unexpected and therefore the researcher wanted to investigate whether a discrepancy between student perceptions and college policy existed. Lecturers are asked to complete a college report for parents/carers detailing every unit the students are undertaking, their

current outcomes and how they could improve. The message from heads of departments was that these forms of communication must be achieved to consequently engage students more successfully and ensure that all students passed their courses. Indeed, finance in FE relies upon student retention and successful completion (Allen, 2012). Both the above enterprises, however, have been negatively received by students who questioned their need. Little feedback was given by parents after receiving their detailed report (which many lecturers had spent hours producing). Many students were very surprised that the college was attempting to create these links to home with many complaining, “Oh this is just like school!”

If links between the college and parents/carers are fragile and are perceived by students of this age as largely unwanted, it is important to investigate the best ways in which students feel their parents/carers can help to support them in their studies within the home context (as is the focus of this study). The communication between parent and student that ensues within the student’s home may be crucial for educational motivation and success based on the research outlined in the next sections. College lecturers attempted to create a link between college and home but were completely unaware of the student-parent relationships that existed and the support for learning that happened behind closed doors. Initial interest in PIB started with Masters’ research completed by the researcher. This research (Darnell, 2014) found that overall parental involvement did not have any effect on student attainment or achievement; that is, there was no significant correlation found between amount of involvement (as perceived by the student) and student results in the form of end-of-year point scores. Different types of involvement, however, did appear to correlate with student outcomes. Students whose parents/carers were passive in their approach to helping (categorised by parental encouragement, allowing students time and space to study) attained two grades higher (on average) than those students who received ‘active’ help (defined as a “helicopter parenting” approach where parents/carers would demand to proof

read work and force themselves to be heavily involved with the students' learning process) (Darnell, 2014).

The college Director of Quality and Standards "DQS" was questioned about the college parental involvement strategy document to strengthen understanding of the college's position in this area and these discussions acted as a precursor for choices made in conducting the pilot and main studies (see Chapter Three). This was seen as important as it allowed the similarities and differences in perception between college and students to be explored and served as a further incentive to investigate this area.

The college's 'parental involvement strategy' document states that, "the purpose of this paper is to compete effectively with local schools and sixth forms through clear and strong channels of communication with parents/guardians" (See Appendix E). It suggests that the college recognises the value of the support of parents/guardians to enable students to achieve 'success' and that it intends to "work with parents of full time students who are under 19 at the start of their course, in order to seek their support in maximising achievement…" (Appendix E, p.2). Communication between staff and parents is seen to be important here.

The strategy also states that "any communication with parents/guardians is conditional on the student's consent" (Appendix E, p.3). However, as it is presumed that students should want their parents/carers to have college contact, the process for the decision to accept the parental-college contact was an 'opt out' system as opposed to an 'opt in' system. Arguably, this decision may have been made due to the college's apparent encouragement for and appreciation of parental involvement. When asked about expectations for parents/carers in the home, the DQS stated:

"I think that's where actually assessment schedules are so important for parents so they know when work is due or when exams are due or you know when they're saying 'actually I wanna go out with my mates' and it's like 'well hold on, have you done this piece

of work, or haven't you, you've got an exam next week, haven't you? So do you think you need to do some revision?'"

When asked about what the college (as an institution) thought parents/carers should be doing to maximize achievement, the DQS had some recommendations:

"We'd really like you to encourage your son/daughter to carry out, you know if they are in college 12 hours a week they should be doing 12 hours a week study outside of lessons…. if they've got assignments due, can you remind them and just check with them that they're doing it?"

The expectations here are clear: to engage learners, parents/carers should question students and use surveillance techniques. However, this view contrasts with the college prospectus which clearly communicates student independence and ownership of learning through its use of phrasing and photographs. The prospectus for the year 2018-2019 is called "Achieve your dreams" and it states that "*students are encouraged to become mature and independent learners*" (College X, 2018, p.5) indicating mixed messages with regard to parental involvement for students in FE in this context.

When asked why parents/carers were seen as important for academic success for college students, the DQS indicated that despite good student experiences at college, support from parents/carers will engage students and help to raise their aspirations, which is likely to be linked to higher grades. She also suggested that the opportunity to communicate with parents allows college staff to educate parents in relation to student routes into work and further study. When asked where the idea came from that parental involvement was key to academic success, the DQS answered*:*

"I suppose it probably is a bit of common sense I think and from all our own experiences, if you think when you were at school then you'd always have your parents' evenings, wouldn't you? You'd have your consultation, you'd get your report, all of those

things.. So I think it is very much a parent expectation, especially from coming from a school where it's very… quite a lot of contact".

The DQS also stated that Ofsted (Office for standards in education, children's services and skills) has an expectation that parents/carers are involved and that when being inspected, students, employers and parents are all surveyed to ensure that links are being made and communication is apparent between the relevant parties to enable successful student academic outcomes. An excerpt of the interview is available in Appendix D. This view is indeed reflected in Ofsted's most recent "Further Education and Skills inspection handbook" which states an expectation that:

"Parents… are engaged in planning learners' development; they are kept informed by the provider of each learner's attendance, progress and improvement…Where appropriate, parents are provided with clear and timely information that details the extent of learners' progress in relation to the standards expected…" (Ofsted, 2016, p. 42 and 44).

'Where appropriate' suggests that in some cases these ideal channels of communication may not be possible and are reflective of an age where students often have independence and autonomy. Ofsted are clear that parental involvement for college-aged students should be in the form of communication with the college and that there is an expectation that parents/carers must be informed of progress in relation to expected standards. However, it is not explicitly stated that parents should be taking an 'active role' in supporting students; the onus is on the college to provide parents/carers with relevant formative progress information but not to necessarily advise on expectations for involvement within the home. Indeed, the "School Inspection Handbook" (for primary and secondary schools) is reflective of the parental involvement expectations within the FE Handbook in relation to communication of standards and progress. However, in contrast to the FE handbook, an expectation of active parental involvement for school-aged children is also evident. Curriculum information must be shared with parents/carers, staff must engage with and encourage parents in supporting their child's learning both in school and at home and parents/carers should be given

guidance about how to support their child to improve outcomes (Ofsted, 2016). There is a clear distinction here between what kinds of involvement Ofsted view as important for different ages of students. This raises questions such as: do FE students' opinions of effective PIB reflect those behaviours identified by Ofsted in respect to types of involvement? What kinds of parental behaviours do students see as supportive in relation to attainment? Is there a mismatch between policy and practice and how do students report their views on PIB at age 16+? These questions are important to consider when comparing/contrasting findings between College guidance, Ofsted and student perceptions within Chapter Five. Although the focus on this project is on FE, Ofsted communicate different views based on stages of learning. However, the DQS's perception is more reflective of the Ofsted school guidance than the Ofsted college guidance which may be reflective of prior educational experiences of the DQS as well as factors such as socio-economic status.

As will be referred to in Chapter Two, for school-aged children it has been argued that parental involvement of many kinds can increase attainment (Jeynes, 2007; Houtenville and Conway, 2008; Cotton and Wikelund 1989; LaRocque et al, 2011; Driessen, Smit and Sleegers, 2005; Nichols-Solomon, 2001; Hill and Taylor, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2005; Durand, 2011; Bodovski and Farkas, 2008; Flouri and Buchanan, 2004; Ferlazzo and Hammond, 2009; Henderson, 1987; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). The DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families) (2007) suggest that parental involvement *always* has a positive effect on students' attainment, stating: "parental involvement has a significant effect on pupil achievement throughout the years of schooling" (DCSF, 2007, p5). However, as will be seen within the literature review, studies relating to parental involvement have found positive, negative and no correlation with attainment.

Much previous research has focussed on parental involvement as a catalyst for achievement, particularly in young children, as the frequency of involvement has been found to generally diminish with the increasing age of a child (Desforges, 2003). However, exploring associations between perceived parental involvement and educational outcomes

at age 16+ in England appears to have received minimal attention, despite the government decision to raise the age of compulsory education/training in England to age 18 and despite the drive of the college in question to engage with parents in its attempt to raise attainment.

There appears to be a mis-match in the policy landscape between school 6th forms and colleges and there are tensions in expectations between Ofsted, schools and colleges in relation to effective forms of parental involvement. This thesis sought to understand any tensions that may exist between college expectations and student need during this stage of adolescence. College X does not explicitly ask parents/carers to sign documentation stating their willingness to support their child at college or communicate with the college, whereas in school sixth forms, parents may be asked to sign a student's homework planner or make regular contact in other ways. In College X, the parental involvement strategy document has not been openly shared with parents or students, despite the document clearly stating that having parents involved will allow the college to compete with school 6th forms in recruiting learners and in raising attainment. It does not state what kinds of involvement are helpful in supporting learning at this level. Arguably, identifying ways to increase retention and attainment is important for college survival. College X appeared to feel a pressure to include a focus on parental involvement due to Ofsted's (2016) expectations that there is some communication between the institution and home and also attempting to compete with schools in terms of provision in relation to parental involvement. However, College X is not transparent on how to implement this or indeed what this kind of involvement should look like.

The study is unique in terms of its focus on FE aged students, whilst comparing parental involvement (in various forms) and outcomes comprising the factors listed above and in its locality. Most research into parental involvement and attainment is American, with UK studies minimally represented (discussed in Chapter Two). In fact, no existing current research has been published in this area with respect to linking the following aspects: parental involvement styles, educational expectations, aspirations, sharing of educational

values, a change in parental involvement with increasing student age and an exploration of the potential ability for the student to dictate and control the parental/carer support provided with outcomes for students. This suggests a gap in knowledge for parenting styles in relation to academic outcomes for UK students aged 16-18 in FE colleges and so identifies an opportunity for the current study to explore this important area which has been previously overlooked. Additionally, there have been very few studies into parental involvement that are reflective of a mixed-methods approach and this supports the rationale for investigating in this way for the current project. This project therefore seeks to extend knowledge in this under-researched area using original methodological choices.

Parental involvement and its relationship with educational outcomes at age 16+ appears to have received minimal attention. Kuh et al, (2010) discuss ways in which students can be offered the optimum conditions in terms of outcomes at college and university. Even at this level, Kuh et al, (2010) perceive that parents/carers have a role to play, albeit the type and amount of involvement are not considered. Parents are mentioned five times in the book where as well as holding and communicating high expectations of students, they must also 'be involved' in their students' lives at college, although the authors do not explore the degree to which this involvement should be and are somewhat unclear about its effects. Home-school agreements are signed by parents/carers whose children attend school. Parents are encouraged to be involved to some extent in the education of their children up until the age of 16, where, if the student fails to attend school, the responsibility lies with the parents (DfE, 2014). But what happens when a child enters college? There are no signed home-school agreements and the student is suddenly engaged in a world of autonomy and independence from the moment in which they enrol at a College of FE. Generally, colleges appear to lack perspective about what constitutes effective involvement for students of college age. The college in question presumes that active involvement is necessary for success, based on a general consensus that parental involvement is positive (regardless of the age of learner or how the involvement is given or received). On the other hand, The FE

and HE Act (1992) although initiating a drive towards raising standards of provision, failed to mention the word ‘parent’ anywhere within its 122-page document. Similarly, the Association of Colleges (AoC) fails to communicate any obvious interest in the benefits of parental involvement. Possibly this may suggest a confusion or lack of understanding by FE institutions of effective parental involvement behaviours for this age group.

Additionally, the way in which FE perceives students’ learning needs and styles between 16-18 years appears to be confused. This age group do not seem to fit into either the ‘child’ or ‘adult’ categories for learning and yet college can be viewed by many students as a fundamental stepping stone to enable future choices and success in the world of work. Acceptable (and optimum) levels (and types) of parental involvement for students of this age have not been clearly identified or previously explored.

Despite mixed societal views of the FE sector in the UK, students continue to be attracted to FE colleges for a number of reasons as discussed above. Much research into the different factors affecting student attainment has focussed on school-based approaches with children younger than 16 years (see Chapter Two). The FE sector has been described as “the Cinderella of English Education”, attracting less research (than other aspects of education), despite the number of students who attend FE colleges (Meschi et al, 2014, p183). However, one might argue that age 16 is actually one of the most important times in students’ educational life. Results at this age affect job prospects and entry to Higher Education. Disregarding any previous success, it is college outcomes for many that play a crucial role in any future success. With a vast number of students studying at an FE college within the UK, one must ask whether different PIB appear to have a relationship with student success within this important domain.

Parental involvement and its relationship to educational outcomes at age 16+ appears to have received minimal attention. Possibly this may suggest a lack of understanding of the

importance of parental involvement for this age group and hence another reason for investigating this complex but very important domain.

1.3 Case description and the FE college context

Primary research for the current study was conducted in an FE college in a multi-ethnic city in the East of England. The college seeks to ensure that those who are welcomed into the college reflect the makeup of the local community. The ethnic groups represented in the college in 2015 comprised: 68.3% white British, 8.8% white other, 6.5% black, 10% Asian, 4.4% mixed ethnicity and 2% classed as 'other'. Male students made up 61% of the student population, female students accounted for 36%. The remainder of students did not disclose their gender.

The college offers a variety of courses across a range of levels from one to six. The college is positioned in the centre of a busy town. The courses offered are similar to those offered by other colleges in the locality. The college also manages the local town sixth form. The prospectus and website for the college in 2015 (when the study was executed) described the college as capable of delivering world-class skills where it aimed to be one of the best colleges in the country. It also described itself as a leading advocate for learning with first class learning environments. It also specifically reported to value a focus on students as well as high performance.

The study focussed on level 3 students who were 16+ and studying full-time level three BTEC courses (BTEC study and qualifications are explained in sections 1.4-1.4.3). These are listed below and the percentage make up of students on each course who were involved in the current study in 2015 are indicated in brackets after each course: Art and Design (9%), Business management (9%), Health and Social Care (9%), Childcare (7%), Computing and ICT (16%), Construction (3%), Engineering (10%), Hair, Beauty and Holistic therapies (5%), Media (8%), Music Technology (5%), Performing Arts (4%), Public Services (4%), Sport and Fitness (5%) and Travel and Tourism (6%). Success rates for all courses averaged at 87%,

with the national success rate being 86%. Interestingly, in the year 2014, (the year prior to commencement of the study) nearly 40% went on to study full-time degree level courses.

For the current study, ages of students for level three courses spanned from 17 to 26. The majority of students were 18 (40%). The next most common age group was 19 years at 24%. Students aged 17 accounted for 22% of the population and 10% were 20 years old. Students between the ages of 21-26 years made up 4% of the total student population.

It was difficult to comment on the perceived social class make-up of the students enrolled at the college, as, unlike age and ethnicity data, the case study college does not specifically collect social class data. The percentage of disadvantaged students for the year 2015 is unknown. Although the researcher attempted to investigate social class in the pilot study (see Methodology), the idea of segregation into classes made the students feel uneasy and so further investigation into social class groupings was not included in the main study. Despite this, it was considered important to be aware of the potential effect of social class on attainment in FE and beyond, particularly if, as suggested by Meschi et al, (2014) and Crawford, Meschi and Vignoles (2011) that colleges are likely to draw in more students from disadvantaged backgrounds (i.e. in terms of economic and social standing) than school sixth forms. Although the public's view of colleges and the connotations associated with a 'college student' are mixed and difficult to assess with any degree of accuracy, within the UK education sector, colleges have been described (by Richardson, 2007) as having second class funding for second class students which in turn leads to second class institutions where funding is estimated at 13% per head lower than in schools. Here the notion of second class is equated to working class (and likely disadvantaged) students. Recently, the 'Annual Report on Education Spending in England' reported that funding in FE has seen the largest cut compared with all other stages of education for young people in the past eight years, falling by 8% (Belfield, Farquharson and Sibieta, 2018).

However, the researcher's knowledge of the sector and interactions with the students in the study did not confirm this idea of the students being 'second/working class'. From working in the sector for 8 years, the researcher discovered that many students chose to attend the college at the focus of the study for a change of scenery or a chance to be treated like an adult where they felt that their school was not fulfilling this need. When interviewing students for places on Health and Social Care level three (prior to beginning the current project), the researcher was required to ascertain the reasons that students had chosen to enrol at the case study college as opposed to staying on at school. The 'desire for independence and autonomy' was given as the most common reason for entry into the college. Some students also expressed a need to 'start again' or make new friends, which is seen to be a key part in seeking and finding identity within the stage of adolescence (Erikson, 1995; Mead, 1934). Nonetheless, research (Coffield et al, 2007 and Crawley, 2014) suggests that some students attend FE colleges because they struggle academically and therefore are not able to continue learning at school beyond age 16. To presume that students who attend the college in question have struggled academically at school (as noted by Coffield et al, 2007 and Crawley, 2014) is an unsolicited assumption as many factors will contribute to a student's decision making regarding educational choices. From the researcher's prior experience of lecturing at the FE college in question, FE student identity and culture is more complex than presuming students attend simply because they are not able to continue learning at school. Decisions to enrol at this particular college may have been influenced by the subjects on offer. The case study college offers a wide range of subjects for study from art and design, construction, computing and ICT to travel and tourism, plumbing and gas and business management. Some subjects like health and social care are chosen by students who want to become nurses and midwives and whose schools fail to offer the courses they desire and the college is viewed as a pathway into Higher Education. Many students enter the college with 9 or more GCSEs with grades A-C which further challenges contentions of FE institutions being attended by students with low academic ability.

1.4 BTEC qualifications

1.4.1 BTEC overview

BTEC stands for the 'Business and Technology Education Council' and was developed in the 1980s as a qualification provider and its qualifications are approved by the Edexcel/Pearson awarding body (Wolf, 2011). For the purposes of the current research project, the BTEC level three 'Extended Diploma' (students undertake 18 units) is the focus of study. This is equivalent to three A-levels (Pearson Education, 2016). UCAS points can be used for entry to higher education and are comparable to the UCAS points gained from the traditional A level route (Pearson Education, 2016). However, as BTEC courses include a large amount of practical application and are discipline-focused, the UCAS points gained from them are only likely to be accepted for a related course at university (or by employers within a specific field) (Williams, 2016). At the end of level three Extended Diploma, students will be given three overall grades which are called 'Pass' (equivalent to a grade C in traditional A-levels), 'Merit' (equivalent to a grade B in traditional A levels), 'Distinction' (equivalent to a grade A in traditional A-levels) and a 'Distinction*' (equivalent to a grade A* in traditional A levels). BTEC provide a clear table in which lecturers, tutors and educational providers can equate grades for varying types of level three courses to UCAS scores. This table can be seen in appendix G.

It was also reported that students with BTEC qualifications are often more able to meet regular deadlines and build up skills of self-discipline due to the structure of the BTEC course in which on-going assessment is a core feature over the two years of study (Reidy, 2015). Interestingly students who progress to university after gaining a BTEC level 3 qualification have been found to be more likely to gain employment than students who study A-level qualifications (Matthews, 2013).

The notion of hard work, organisation and motivation is also measured by BTEC assessment as described below:

1) To get a pass grade for a unit the student must complete and pass all the P (pass) criteria for a unit.

2) To get a merit grade for a unit the student must complete and pass all the P (pass) criteria as well as the M (merit) criteria for a unit.

3) To get a distinction grade for a unit the student must complete all the P (pass), M (merit) and D (distinction) criteria for a unit. (Pearson Education, 2016)

In other words, the only way to gain highly through the process of BTEC assessment is to produce large quantities of high quality work that meets certain levels of thinking and analysis skills (more often than not P criteria involves describing, M criteria involves assessing and D criteria involves evaluating). This assessment procedure has interesting links to work by Dweck (2006) who explored the 'fixed mind-set' and the 'growth mind-set'. Fixed mind-set refers to learners who are convinced that intelligence is innate and that they can do little to change their situation. Whereas individuals with a growth mind-set tend to be confident that they can work hard, problem-solve and achieve their goals through perseverance and development opportunities. Through BTEC courses, students have the option to attain high grades by completing their merit and distinction criteria as 'extra assignments' which highlights perseverance and hard work and therefore has associations with the growth mind-set as mentioned above (Dweck, 2006).

1.4.2 Why involve BTEC students?

There are four reasons for the focus on level three BTEC students as participants for the study. The first reason relates to BTEC and its development as a tried and tested system of equivalency for UCAS points (Ofqual, 2015; Pearson Education, 2016: Wolf, 2011), which was needed for the statistical analysis in the current study. Secondly, BTEC is a well-known, reputable qualification provider which has been used successfully to provide qualifications in the FE college context since 1984 (Wolf, 2011) and so is well established in the context of Further Education. The third reason relates to the decision to gain perceptions from students

within their second year of their course programme. Level three courses are mostly two-year courses and within the college, 80% of level three courses are programmes developed and examined by BTEC. As explained in section 3.3.1.4, involving second year students was important, since these students were likely to have already established themselves at the college as FE learners and were therefore viewed to be more 'settled' than new first year students for whom college may bring emotional uncertainty and stress due to a change in environment. More important, is the fact that the attainment/outcome scores for second year students would be in the form of UCAS points which were seen both as comparable across courses both in and out of college and from the perspective of universities (see Ofqual, 2015 and Appendix G). First year students would not have gained outcomes in any comparable form, since different courses complete different units and at different times over the year and some students are able to progress on to their second year without completing a full suite of units. Calculating points scores for different units would have been difficult and might not necessarily relate to common currency, as UCAS points do. Additionally, second year students were also more likely to have established 'agreements' with their parents/carers over their FE status in terms of work and study and set expectations for the amount of parental involvement they desired (on both parts) because they had been enrolled and studying at level three for a longer length of time. The fourth reason for focusing on students enrolled on BTEC courses is that BTEC qualifications cover a wide range of courses at the chosen college. Including a wide range of courses was important for the current project, since research question three (see section 3.1.1 in the Methodology chapter) asked if there was a statistically significant difference in student responses to statements about PIB according to course.

1.4.3 Equal parity for level three qualifications and UCAS points

In 2011, a major programme was undertaken to establish equivalences between different qualification types was completed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which looked at school and college measures of performance and sought to ensure that all

qualifications labelled with a level were equivalent and had parity (Wolf, 2011). Despite this, there has been much debate about whether BTEC courses are valued as much as the traditional A-level route. Qualifications awarded by bodies such as BTEC are viewed to be 'easier' than traditional A-levels due to assessment methods such as on-going regular essay writing throughout the two years instead of examinations at the end of the programme (Reidy, 2015).

A report commissioned by Ofqual and reported by YouGov (2015) investigated perceptions of A-levels with respect to BTEC qualifications. Results indicated that 55 percent of the general public, 45 percent of parents and 77 percent of young people agreed that BTEC qualifications are valued as highly as A-levels for HE institutions. Additionally, 40 percent of the general public, 35 percent of parents and 68 percent of young people agreed that BTEC qualifications are valued as highly as A-levels for employers.

Ofqual is responsible for overseeing the accountability and comparability of the levels (1-8). A qualification at level 3 is described as being at the same 'level of demand' as an A level (albeit not the same size, specifically) (Ofqual, 2015, p.2). Therefore, qualifications studied at level 3 that are considered to be of a comparable level of demand are able to credit the same number of UCAS points (Ofqual, 2015).

A pragmatic approach has been taken in respect to BTEC and FE achievement where conversion to UCAS points is seen to be reliable for the purposes of this study where all participants are part of the same college. Additionally, from experience working in the FE college environment, these grades have a shared meaning to lecturer, tutors and students. They represent a currency of achievement within a particular context, and as such, can be seen as reliable for the purposes of comparison across courses within the same college.

Edexcel/Pearson, the regulators and awarding body for BTEC qualifications, are responsible for checking and verifying standards across different institutions. The main differences in terms of assessment between A-levels and the BTEC level 3 Extended Diploma are: a)

BTEC assessments are made up of short, regular tasks that span across all units taken by the students unlike a focus on end-of-year examinations associated with most A-level subjects and b) External markers are used to assess all students' learning in traditional A-levels whereas BTEC coursework is assessed by the lecturers within the institutions where the student is based. This kind of internal assessment may be viewed as unreliable (Lambert and Lines, 2000). However, Edexcel/Pearson have strict regulations in place for institutions who are assessing work internally. Work is likely to be second marked (internally verified) and then further externally verified by visiting assessors who are seen to be impartial. External moderators check a random small selection of work help to ensure that the assessment process is fair and reliable. Despite this, college lecturers are likely to feel a top down pressure from line managers to pass students who may not meet the standard as institutions are paid by qualification and not by student and if students fail their formal BTEC qualification overall, the institution receives less financial contribution. These problems were identified by Thompson and Wolstencroft (2015) who noted that managers in FE experienced a conflict in values where they felt burdened to implement processes which were driven by financial pressures.

Despite the concerns with reliability as documented above, BTEC qualifications are seen to have parity with traditional A-levels in terms of UCAS points, and as such were used as the form of assessment to judge and compare attainment in the current study. Every assessment process is likely to exhibit problems of some kind, but as a nationally recognised qualification that is validated by awarding bodies, it is seen as the best way to capture student outcome scores.

1.5 Current study definitions in FE

1.5.1 Parental/carer involvement

It is presumed by many that the multi-dimensional notion of parental involvement is fundamental in helping children to achieve academically, but the interpretation of parental involvement has varied between researchers (Sampson, 2014) making it difficult to pinpoint

a shared definition. Ceballo, et al, (2014, p117) claimed that, “no precise and consistent operational definition of ‘parental involvement’ has emerged in the literature” and therefore the way in which parental involvement has been measured differs widely amongst studies (as has been confirmed in the current study in the review of literature in Chapter Two).

Fan and Chen (2001) noted this problem and discussed the need for a clear definition, since the umbrella of “parental involvement” can mean many things. One wide-ranging definition in existing research has referred to parental/carer behaviours, practices, aspirations and expectations for children and how these are communicated, rules, parent/carer-tutor communication and parent/carer-child interactions about school (Fan and Chen, 2001). Although this is a helpful starting point, for students in FE, parental/carer involvement is likely to include a set of behaviours which may be different to those offered for students who are younger in age and in primary and secondary education. For example, a meta-analysis carried out by Boonk et al, (2018) reviewed 75 different parental involvement studies (featured in Chapter Two), and segregated involvement into different behaviours which included: high parental expectations and aspirations, values of attainment and reinforcing learning within the home, academic encouragement and support and parent-child educational discussions, which were seen to be helpful for students within the period of adolescence. Boonk’s (2018) study also noted aspects of academic pressure, parental control, interference and conflict with homework which includes parents checking, controlling and helping with work.

Although it is useful to begin to unpick the different kinds of behaviours that create parental/carer involvement, it would be more helpful to group these parental/carer behaviours into specific categories to be clear about what does and does not constitute parental/carer involvement for the current project. It is important, therefore, that the definition of parental involvement for the current study is sufficiently wide enough in scope to gather responses which articulate parental involvement in diverse ways but is also clear to offer categories in which behaviours can be grouped. This is important because research aim one seeks to explore which aspects of parental/carer behaviours are important or problematic

and offering a wide definition reflects the openness of discovery in relation to involvement allowing the researcher to gain a holistic view of this complex concept.

In accepting that the general definition for parental involvement in this study needs to be wide-ranging, it is helpful to consider the different ways in which this vast concept can be categorised. Vandergrift and Greene (1992) identified two key elements that they believed made up parental involvement. The first was called 'level of commitment to support' which included encouragement, sympathy, reassurance and understanding. The second was termed 'parental activity and participation' which related to parents or carers engaging in something that was observable by the student (such as checking homework or spelling, reading through work or offering advice). This is a useful starting point for thinking about developing a definition, since, when scrutinised, it is clear that these categories are reflective of 'emotional support' and 'practical support' which are key to thinking about the different parental behaviours that exist. Emotional support centres around responsive parental/carer communication techniques which offer a safety net to support students' emotional journey through their education. However, 'practical support' can encompass the idea of different forms of capital (Bourdieu, 2010). Economic capital in the current study refers to the financial contribution that parents can make which directly impacts on a student's ability to study at college. This may take the form of a laptop or specialist equipment which may be useful for a specific course (i.e. IT or engineering). Cultural capital refers to how an individual accumulates or gathers knowledge, behaviours and skills (through, for example, cultural experiences of attending museums, theatres, etc) which includes a disposition to think, feel and therefore act in a particular way (Bourdieu, 2010). Bourdieu (2010) also suggests that such capitals become embodied. Hard work and motivation for education might be one such disposition. These dispositions are often passed down from parents/carers to their children and can allow or reflect cultural competence which gives advantage in relation to social status or social standing. Within education, the accumulation of parental/carer educational advantage may be reflected in a parent's ability to proof read work effectively, to write

academically or to develop systems to find relevant information efficiently, as well as the skills needed to communicate effectively, to discuss, to reason and to evaluate.

The categories of ‘emotional support’ and ‘practical support’ have partly been used to articulate what the current project views as ‘parental involvement’. However, it is felt that there are other aspects relating to parental involvement that are missing from the categorisation used by Vandergrift and Greene (1992). As well as considering emotional and practical support techniques and the idea of economic and cultural capital, parental/carer involvement can include an additional stimulus. This potential influence for students’ attainment at college is termed ‘academic socialisation’ (Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried, 2013) which relates to parental communication of expectations, aspirations and values for education. Student perception of parental/carer expectations, aspirations and values feature in the PIB statements through which students were asked to respond and so, in the current study, are viewed as a key component of parental involvement/influences for education.

Another feature of involvement which has not been widely defined is whether the term ‘parental/carer involvement’ refers mainly to maternal or paternal involvement. For the purposes of this study it would be impossible to segregate involvement of mothers from involvement of fathers, except for students who do have a clear distinction (i.e. by parental separation). The definition must also consider students who live with carers other than their parents such as grandparents, other family members or foster parents. Therefore, the choice was taken to use the term ‘carer(s)’ to denote the individual(s) who have responsibility for the student or, if over 18, the individual(s) who reside with and (who may) support the student.

In considering all the elements explored above, a clear definition is provided below. This definition needs to be interpreted with a few things in mind:

Firstly, this definition has been chosen as it presumes that parental/carer involvement relates to **“any individual who has responsibility for or who resides with and/or is the key contact for a student”.**

Secondly, below this definition it is **clearly articulated** what **kinds** of parental/carer involvement are and are not included.

Thirdly, the use of **PIB statements** to engage students in forming their responses means that parental/carer involvement feedback is likely to relate to the initial twenty-four statements (see Table 3.2) which encompasses **emotional** and **practical support** as well as **academic socialisation**.

Parental involvement for the current study is defined as:

"An exchange between parent/carer and student that has directly influenced the student in regard to their college education and attainment".

This includes three types of support:

Three support-types:

1) '**Emotional support'** (showing interest, encouragement, praise, questioning, listening, reassuring, empathising)

2) '**Practical support'** (split further into two parts: a) **Economic Capital** (financial resources which can be used to buy tools which will directly impact the student and their learning on the course e.g. a laptop or specialist equipment) b) **Cultural Capital** (parental/carer knowledge, behaviours, competence, ideas, organisation, sign-posting, skills and dispositions which are communicated to or passed down to students giving them an educational advantage at college)

3) 'Academic Socialisation' support techniques which relate to parental/carer communication of expectations, aspirations and values

To be clear, parental/carer involvement in the current study is focused on behaviours that are exhibited between parent/carer and student and does NOT include the following:

- Communication with college staff about the student
- The influences of siblings

- General economic provision (e.g. supplying a house and travel money to students)
- Other family members who do not have responsibility for the student
- Outside support (e.g. home tutors or clubs)
- Indirect supportive techniques (i.e. cooking dinner or ironing clothes).

1.5.2 Attainment and achievement

Within the educational domain and in my experience of working in FE many words are used to describe a student who has learnt something, been assessed and had 'value added' to them in some way. Terms such as 'successful', 'made academic gains', 'produced high outcomes', 'attained higher grades' or 'achieved good results' can often be used interchangeably. However, when studied in more depth, a clear difference does exist particularly between attainment and achievement (see Callender, 2008). Attainment can be identified as a score, or a point that has been reached in terms of assessment. Achievement, however, is not so simple. As an example, if a student enters college with 4 GCSEs and is predicted to gain a score of pass on their BTEC work but actually receives a distinction grade, they could be described as having 'achieved' because they have performed above and beyond what was expected and predicted of them (even if this grade is below average).

The study is concerned with student outcomes in attainment values in the form of UCAS points scores. It is not concerned with achievement (i.e. the difference between predicted outcome and actual outcome by means of 'adding value').

1.6 Overview of the thesis

Chapter Two reviews literature which was deemed important to consider in relation to the current study and covers information which is segregated into two clear sections. The first section relates to theory surrounding important aspects of parental involvement and the stages of adolescence, research into the influences/factors for parental involvement and attainment such as gender, age, ethnicity and cultural capital and parental behaviours and parenting styles.

The second section focuses on existing studies of parental involvement which have some similarity in focus to the current study (i.e. participants' perceptions of parental involvement and attainment).

Like the literature review, Chapter Three is split into two main sections. The first section details the methodological approaches and the second section explains the methods for data collection, analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four explains the findings in order of research question (see Chapter Three, section 3.1.1 for a list of the questions).

Chapter Five explores the key findings, analysis and triangulation between quantitative and qualitative data gathered by three different research tools and discusses these findings against existing research. This section is split into four main parts to show how the project has answered each of the research questions in turn.

Chapter Six concludes the main findings, contributions to knowledge, recommendations, limitations and offers suggestions for future research in this important area.

Chapter Two: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Parental involvement has been linked to higher grades and increased academic motivation (Fan, Williams and Wolters, 2012; Henry, Cavanagh and Oetting, 2011; Hill and Tyson, 2009). Although many studies have looked at the benefits of parental involvement for Early and Primary school years, (for example see Jeynes, 2005; Senechal and Young, 2008 and Jelley and Sylva, 2017) Altschul (2011) suggests that high school students' parental involvement has much less effect on attainment than for primary school pupils and that the greatest impact of parental involvement can be seen in younger children specifically. However, Cotton and Wikelund (1989) suggest that outcomes can be promoted with older students right through into middle school and secondary levels where parental involvement remains beneficial throughout schooling. They claim: "Parental involvement is effective in fostering achievement and affective gains at all levels" (Cotton and Wikelund, 1989, p5). Likewise, Epstein (2007) argued that regardless of age or initial ability, parents who were *involved* in the education of their children generated students who would become 'successful'. These ideas are particularly interesting because parental involvement can be exhibited in many forms and has been studied in many ways. For some, frequency of involvement is seen to be important (for example see Hango, 2007; Dubose et al, 2014 and Wang and Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). For others, parental involvement is related to factors such as cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2011). In relation to parental involvement and attainment, it is important to note that student outcomes are not likely to be dictated by the amount of help offered, but by the type. Type of involvement and subsequent attainment is due to the quality, not quantity of parent-child interactions (Knollmann and Wild, 2007). Indeed, student perceptions of the quality of interactions and types of parental behaviours is the focus of the current study, not the quantity of those exchanges and, as suggested by Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack (2007), the way in which parents are involved has been seen to determine the extent to which students become successful in academic functioning. This

literature review discussed below sought to explore a number of areas that relate to parental involvement for FE students aged 16+. However, as shown by the brief introduction above, much of the research literature concerning parental involvement and student attainment pertains to students attending primary and secondary school rather than college aged students. Therefore, in reviewing the literature it was necessary to ascertain whether certain parental involvement behaviours were reported to be important for different ages and stages of students within education, and if any were specific to students aged 16+ and their corresponding attainment. This literature review also (for the most part) focuses on research which includes individuals within the stage of adolescence (12-18 years), since parental involvement for early and primary aged children is likely to be very different from those behaviours seen for adolescent students in FE.

In generating the literature review, a number of search terms were used including: 'parental involvement', 'parenting styles', 'parent behaviour', 'parental participation', 'parenting factors', as well as 'adolescent development', 'support for independent learners', and 'factors affecting attainment for adolescents' and 'student influences'. The researcher also used current knowledge of theory to identify relevant frameworks to be reviewed. Many journals were reviewed including: *Educational Review, Research in Post-compulsory Education, Sociology of Education, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Social Work Research, Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, Journal of Education Policy, Psychological Review, International Journal of Sociology and the Family, Journal of Early Adolescence, Developmental Psychology, Adolescence, Child Development, Journal of Comparative Family Studies, Social Science Research, Educational Research Review, Educational Research and Evaluation* and *Comparative Education Review*. A total of 284 sources were initially scrutinised before using the most relevant to inform knowledge, understanding and research choices and to fulfil the following aims of the current project:

Aim ONE: To investigate students' perceptions of Parental Involvement Behaviours (PIB) regarding its influence on attainment and to identify similarities and differences between students' perceptions and college policy/practice and inspectorate views.

Aim TWO: To examine associations between student outcomes (UCAS points) and both a) reported PIB and b) the factors of student age, gender, ethnicity, cultural capital and course.

Aim THREE: To identify if students of different age, ethnic group, gender and course respond differently to questions about their PIB and, if so, whether the difference in response to Likert scale items is statistically significant or not.

Aim FOUR: To establish whether the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the investigation of student perceptions of PIB discovers distinct models of student experiences and, if so, whether they reflect the hypothesised categories of DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV (or not) and also whether these models have an association with attainment (or not).

As noted by Taylor, Clayton and Rowley (2004), much parental involvement research and literature focuses on one of two main perspectives. The first perspective relates to the behavioural features of parental involvement (i.e. *what parents/carers do*). The second perspective (as identified by Taylor, Clayton and Rowley, 2004) suggests that socio-demographic, biological and contextual characteristics also influence parental involvement (i.e. instead of just *what parents/carers do*, it relates more specifically to *who parents/carers are*) and the context in which the parenting takes place. Indeed, what parents choose to do will be determined by their views, ideals and cultural and social contexts, meaning that the two perspectives are effectively inseparable because they are influenced by each other. It is therefore important for the current literature review to take account of both perspectives. It does this by looking at parenting styles literature and existing research into parental involvement which attempts to find associations between parental behaviours and attainment. It also critiques both sociological and psychological theory as the project seeks to benefit from understanding PIB and notes that PIB can be influenced by/derived from both

disciplines. Using a range of different literature ensures that neither perspective is over-looked.

For ease of exploration and explanation, the review of literature has been segregated into three main sections which are linked to the research aims. The first section (2.2) critiques sociological and psychological influences for adolescent PIB and links to all four research aims (see above). The second section (2.3) reviews literature which associates attainment to perceptions of PIB (along with the influences of additional factors) and is linked to research questions one, two and three. Within this section, there is a comprehensive discussion which specifically explores existing literature into PIB and attainment. It analyses findings for parental involvement research and unpicks the different measures or constructs that have been used to investigate parental involvement and attainment as well as indicating the age group or stage of education in which the studies were completed to be clear about the focus on adolescent students for the current project. In this section a mix of primary (first-hand) and secondary (not first-hand) research is used and is explicitly presented as such. Studies which were most similar to the current project (in terms of exploring associations between PIB and attainment which included students in early to late adolescence) were analysed in detail to tease out important methodological considerations which influenced research choices for the current project. This section also reviews additional factors affecting attainment and PIB such as gender, ethnicity, cultural capital and age as well as the influences made by high expectations and aspirations for education which links to research aims two and three. The third and final section (2.4) critically reviews literature on parenting styles which links to research aim four specifically.

2.2 Sociological and psychological influences for adolescent PIB

This section is multi-disciplinary as it considers both sociological and psychological influences as important in determining why certain types of PIB might be displayed within the context of sociology (i.e. cultural capital, parent-child relationships, Social Learning theory and judgment of students' accomplishments against those of their parents), but also how the

PIB might be received by adolescent students in relation to psychology (development of self-concept and identity and want of independence for students aged 16+). Both psychological and sociological aspects are evident within the research aims (see above) which also reflects the choice taken to include both areas.

Sociology in respect of the family unit is important when considering the influences of parental involvement on an individual who has reached the stage of adolescence. As well as considering the individual behaviours that are exhibited by the parents (i.e. described by Taylor, Clayton and Rowley (2004) as 'what parents do') the context in which the child has been accustomed to throughout their life is also important to consider (although difficult to measure) and relates not only to individual parental behaviours but also to the intrinsic values and expectations that parents/carers have (i.e. who parents/carers are).

2.2.1 Sociology within the family

It is important to recognise theory surrounding parental influences in relation to both sociology and psychology. The importance of social processes within the family was identified by Mead (1934). He advocated the importance of social interaction with family members in the development of an individual's self and mind. He claimed that humans are shaped by the attitudes displayed towards them and after interaction with others, the notion of 'me' and the 'self' can be understood. He suggested that the way in which the 'self' is constructed both affects the conduct of the individual but also affects our cooperative processes where we develop recognition of ourselves through others, and, most notably, through social groups such as the family. This is particularly important when considering parental involvement and the values and attitudes towards education that can be communicated from parent/carer to child since these values can be engrained within the constructs of the child. In other words, aspirations, expectations and values can become intrinsically, rather than extrinsically binding and this may or may not be dependent on the quality of PIB and the responsiveness of the parents/carers to students' needs. Mead (1934) suggests that children develop a sense of self which is aligned to age. The first stage relates

to social learning practices and imitation, the second is where individuals begin to take account of the actions of others which then develops into the 'generalised other' – where individuals are able to view and understand perceptions of others within an organised social system (i.e. a family) but then view themselves in relation to the groups with whom they belong. By age 16, adolescents are able to anticipate the actions of others in the group, suggesting that they have deep understandings of the group and where they fit within it. As well as linking to self-fulfilling prophecy and the importance of high expectations and aspirations for children, Mead's (1934) theory suggests that individuals are shaped by their family group and so, in addition to belonging to the family group, they are also a consequence of the family group. Indeed, they might be viewed as being so engrained within it that their own perceptions will be formed by the constructions of self that have been developed within that group over time. This affinity to a particular group suggests that children are likely to adopt the value systems provided by their parents/carers subconsciously and so is important when thinking about the differences in PIB between different families and different student experiences. Indeed, research aim one sought to identify and draw out all the important and problematic aspects of PIB as perceived by students. In effect, the students' perceptions cannot be removed from the historical (e.g. younger school years) and present home-context. This is important to note because if students feel an affinity towards their family group (specifically parents) then even if parenting practices are viewed as unhelpful, their loyalty towards the group may not allow them to be communicated as such. This is particularly important to consider in the current project where students are asked to reveal their perceptions about their parents' involvement over time and how helpful or problematic they feel it can be. If students feel a strong affinity to their family group, then they may be unlikely to criticise their PIB choices. This may be viewed as problematic but is hard to measure and impossible to alter. However, it will be important to consider, particularly when collating and reporting findings and being clear that the findings are based purely upon student perceptions. Mead (1934) also asserts that an individual's identity cannot be developed independently and that social stimuli constitute our

minds. Indeed, young people may search for identity by social interaction through other groups than the family (i.e. peers, religious organisations) and this can lead to a sense of self, where individuals view themselves in relation to the groups that they see themselves belonging to. Here it would be useful to ascertain in the current project which groups are important to students. Explicitly: Does the family still have an important contribution to make in terms of supporting and valuing education and are individual behaviours important? Alternatively, are parents/carers more likely to take a back seat and trust their child to be motivated to succeed without a need for an external drive? Has this external drive been converted to an intrinsic drive?

Mead's (1934) 'development of self' theory does, however, relate to the notion of a 'self-concept' which plays an important role in Weiner's (1985) attribution theory. Weiner (1985) identifies a strong relationship between attainment and self-concept. He recognises that attainment can be linked or attributed to a number of factors: ability, effort, difficultly level of task and luck. He states that motivation and emotion are related to self-concept but are also related to previous successes and failures. However, one critique of Weiner (1985) is that he fails to acknowledge the importance of social interaction in the construction of self-concept, which others (Mead, 1934, Erikson, 1995) argue is a core component of the development of the concept of 'self'. This is particularly important when exploring parental involvement, since previous attainment is likely to affect both student and parent attitudes towards education and may also determine the likelihood for top-down parenting approaches where parents/carers view their children to be lacking motivation or drive (see section 2.3.3). Failure or success may be attributed to different factors and parents' responses to this are likely to be demonstrated in their PIB which is important for research question one. Additionally, attribution theory is important to recognise in the context of students' attribution of blame i.e. if a student is receiving low grades and does not have a positive relationship with their parent/carer(s), are they likely to communicate frustration with the PIB they feel they have (or have not) received and use that as a reason for their situation? Alternatively,

students may be more likely to attribute their successes to supportive, positive PIB or to the advantages of intrinsic motivation and hard work. The factors described by Weiner (1985) above fail to mention external help sources as associated with attainment, such as parental/carer involvement which can include parents/carers employing private tutors (although this aspect could be seen to come under the heading of 'luck' in terms of whether students have supportive or economically advantaged parents/carers or not) and it will be important to be aware of attribution theory when analysing student responses to situate and understand the development of their perceptions more fully.

The current project focuses on students aged 16+ within the age of adolescence and so exploring theory which relates to adolescence is useful. As mentioned previously, Erikson (1995) is aware of the importance of social processes in an individual's development of self and specifically offers an explanation for the social stages that an individual passes through as they age. This is particularly important to consider for the current study, since its focus is on students aged 16+. The theory of psycho-social development relates to the stages an individual may pass through as they grow older (Erikson, 1995) and is concerned with identity development through social exchanges. This identity development is again important when considering parental involvement, since parents/carers play a role in shaping and moulding the child in their attitudes and motivation towards education. Each stage includes a mix of conflict and important events which serve to mould the individual and contribute to the way an individual's identity is developed through interactions with society. However, there is one stage which is of particular interest when referring to the current study.

The 'identity versus role confusion' stage spans between ages twelve and eighteen years and relates to changes within adolescence. Erikson (1995) identifies that an important factor within this stage is the child's relationship with peers. Indeed, peers are likely to become more important to students (as well as more influential) than parents/carers which links to the idea of independence and freedom that students seek within this stage, which is likely to be relevant for the current study (see also work by Scheck, 2014). It is also suggested that

within this stage, adolescents are likely to resist parental expectations, to change their mind about their future path and to experiment with new ideas to determine their identity. These behaviours can be described as ‘psycho-social crisis’ which refers to the way in which a child’s inner self conflicts with society/external forces. If parents/carers and peers are supportive of the child experimenting with roles and differing identities in this way, the child is more likely to develop a full identity (i.e. not be confused about their role in society) (Erikson, 1995). Again, this is important to consider when students reveal their parental involvement behaviours in terms of the level of responsiveness or understanding/patience that parents are reported to have for their children and is crucial in underpinning research aim one, which seeks to unpick the distinctions between Ofsted requirements, college guidance, policy maker perception and students’ views.

Erikson (1995) additionally maintained that this can be a stage where children feel vulnerable. He suggested a number of coping mechanisms for identity crisis which can include ‘foreclosure’. This refers to situations where adolescents appear happy to take on the identity of their parents in terms of their value systems due to convenience but do not appear to give these choices due consideration (and so may not offer consistent explanations for their feeling towards education and PIB). Another coping mechanism identified by Erikson (1995) is ‘diffusion’ which refers to adolescents who fail to communicate passion or commitment and focus on doing the minimum required to get through their compulsory education. This again is important to consider when students are describing their feelings towards specific PIB. Erikson’s perspectives indicate that need for the researcher to understand and appreciate that students have a range of motives for attaining the grades that they do and in reality, not all students strive to get the very best grades they can. Indeed, Erikson’s work predominantly relates to students up to the age of 18 years, but the current study involves students in their twenties who may have a host of different reasons for attaining as they do. Some students only aspire to pass, and this may be due to individual experiences of education, an imitation of their parents’ attitudes or a negative view of

education which may have been formed through rebellion or difference in attitudes to education than that of their parents/carers. However, his ideas behind psycho-social development will be useful to understand when considering adolescent student responses for the reasons outlined above.

In relation to imitation of parental attitudes to education and the idea that children's values, attitudes and expectations are shaped through the family group in which they belong, Bandura (1976) believed that standards of behaviour are shaped through tuition or modelling, which, like all the theorists in this section except Weiner (1985), relates to social interaction within the family. Social Learning theory suggests that role modelling is an important part of parental influences for children who are likely to be affected by the behaviours they witness as they develop and are likely to copy them. This is important to consider in relation to the influences of parents/carers as parents/carers are likely to be the main role models for students involved in the current study and will be important in investigating research aims one and four specifically. However, there is only one specific part of Bandura's theory which is deemed to be helpful in the current study because the theory as a whole has been widely criticised (see below).

Research into Social Learning theory, as devised by Bandura (1976) has its origins in a somewhat controversial experiment using a Bobo doll. Critics of the Bobo doll experiment claim that during the experiment, children were trained to be aggressive and that the experiment was ethically and morally wrong and subsequently cannot be used to support the idea that behaviours are purely determined by imitation (Worthman and Loftus, 1992). Additionally, Social Learning theory does not account for biological state or inherited traits of behaviour, as it relies purely on one individual observing another. An additional critique of Bandura's Social Learning theory is that it does not appear to be as equally evident across different ages of children in relation to the likelihood of imitation. As noted by Erikson, (1995) for some adolescents within the 'identity versus role confusion' stage, individuals may wish to seek their own experiences and to experiment to find their own values and attitudes,

rather than imitating the views and behaviours of their parents. Here, these two theories collide and may be affected by other wider factors such as economical position, peers or intrinsic motivation which is important to consider when analysing student perceptions within the current study.

However, despite these criticisms, there is one specific part of Bandura's theory which is important to recognise for the current study. This important aspect relates to 'differential reactions' (see below). In discussing the likelihood that children might imitate their parents, Bandura (1976) also claimed that adults set standards and establish the behaviours for which children can be rewarded. Adults respond positively when children meet or exceed a given standard or target and are also likely to react negatively when a child's behaviour does not meet desired outcomes. "Differential reactions" (Bandura, 1976, p.137) shape the way children respond to their own behaviour – either by self-rewarding or self-punishing actions. This also links to behaviourist theory and ways in which behaviour can be affected by stimuli (see Watson, 1930; Skinner, 1948; Pavlov, 1897). Behaviourism suggests that behaviour can be shaped and that external rewards can be used to mould behaviours which are seen to be desirable. In the case of learners aged 16+ parents may offer rewards in return for hard work and high grades. However, in the context of this study, the notion of rewards in themselves are too simplistic to be seen to be effective for learners aged 16+ and Bandura (1976) identified additional complexities of parental behaviours and student outcomes. Interestingly, he found that children are likely to adopt standards that they have observed others using and judge their own outcomes against standards set by adults or respected peers (this idea of peer support also links to Scheck, 2014). Bandura's experiment revealed that the behaviour of adults who set high standards and only allowed rewards for superior performance are reflected in children who observed this. Adults who rewarded themselves for accomplishing limited/low performance tasks also influenced the behaviour of children in this area where the children were more likely to feel accomplished by achieving low performance tasks and did not strive to push themselves to achieve at any higher level. This

is important when considering the role-modelling effect of parents of students in FE and in development of motivation for attainment. In effect, expectations and allowing self-rewards for different levels of achievement appear to be imitated through observation. This is relevant to and has important implications for the child-parent relationship and for intrinsic motivation, how students view 'success' and how likely they are to want to gain the highest possible grades, rather than the pass grades. Consequently, this specific part of Bandura's theory is crucial in understanding and exploring parent-child exchanges in relation to values for education and behaviours surrounding attainment at college. Although these parenting practices may not be evident at age 16+, parental involvement behaviours are cumulative over time and so these aspects may have had some influence throughout childhood. In relation to this, the self-efficacy theory proposed by Bandura (1977) suggests that an individual can be aware of their own capability to behave in a way that produces positive outcomes (i.e. performance/attainment). He suggests that belief in one's own ability plays a significant role in how goals, tasks and challenges are responded to and is linked to the individual's perception of external social factors. Indeed, Bandura (1977) claims that observation of others influences social behaviours and cognitive processes (i.e. the notion that hard work will provide a benefit). In effect, an individual's perception about his/her own capability is likely to be shaped externally through observation, modelling, structure and guidance, which are likely to be provided by the adult (and in relation to this study – specifically a parent/parents). These aspects are particularly important to consider for perceptions gathered in the current project across all research aims.

2.2.2 Cultural and social capital

Bourdieu (1973) suggested that parents with high SES (Socio-economic status) enable their children to have educational experiences which are comfortable and familiar (which helps them to succeed academically) through encouragement and development of attitudes, and knowledge. Specifically, children who have parents with high SES are likely to access more opportunities in education due to a mix of economic, social and cultural capital, Bourdieu,

(2010), argues. Bourdieu (1977) suggested that the term 'social capital' referred to an individual's social space (referred to as field or habitus) and that (as well as being associated with a social class group) individuals can articulate capital through social interactions and networks which can be professional, or relate to employment or education. He suggests that 'social capital' can be used to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children within different social classes, describing social capital to be the combination of innate property (i.e. which may be inherited by children) with the merits of acquisition (i.e. what parents can offer their children; either in the sense of material gains or psychological gains) which can result in academic success. As an example, if a student whose father's best friend owns a law firm offers her a job at the company, she is placed in an advantageous social position due to her social contacts. She will then presumably gather social contacts in similar advantageous positions and use them to benefit her own family in the future. In this way, the notion of social capital can cross generations and so is of interest for the current study in relation to parental influences on children's attainment and success. For Bourdieu (1977) the reproduction of middle-class academic success/higher achievement is reinforced not just through social capital, but also through cultural and economic capital. Notably he does not talk about these as being in isolation of the other. Economic and cultural capital can be seen to underpin social capital. Economic capital (the acquisition of money) allows children to obtain more cultural capital which links with higher skills and knowledge. Displaying higher levels of cultural and economic capital feeds into social acceptance and higher status in society (social capital). Social capital can be seen to provide more opportunity and can therefore affect economic capital. In effect the process can be seen to be cyclical and can be transferred between parents and children. It is the combination of the three capitals which reproduces the middle classes and the advantages they and their children benefit from. However, Bourdieu's (1973) ideas have been challenged by other scholars. DiMaggio (1982) found that, after controlling the factor of family background, cultural capital influences attainment where individuals whose parents have low SES can be influenced with more benefit than for those students whose parents have high SES. DiMaggio (1982) created a

model of cultural mobility where he claimed that status culture is not exclusive and that academic success for students is more closely related to parental education than parental occupation, suggesting that the relationship between socio-economic status and attainment is not as straightforward as Bourdieu's (1973) earlier ideas about class and capital. Indeed, Bourdieu does not state that one has a greater influence than the other. A good education provides insights into the benefits of education, and the type of education that is important and the ways in which it can be reinforced (e.g. museum visits and other education-forming initiatives). The associations between cultural capital and academic success (as proposed by Bourdieu, 1973) have also met additional criticism because the way in which cultural capital is defined and measured has differed amongst studies. Some scholars have looked at the idea of concerted cultivation (see Lareau, 2003 – discussed below) which involves parents engaging children in skills of reasoning, structured activities and use of particular language traits (see Bernstein, 1971 – also discussed below). Others have looked at cultural activity participation (see Kalmijin and Kraaykamp, 1996) or parental education (Turmo, 2004). Conversely, Tramonte and Willms (2010) purely had an interest in resources which were economic-based. Disagreement in how to measure cultural capital has led to a mixture of findings in relation to associations between cultural capital and educational outcomes which have been strong, weak and non-existent (Bodovski and Farkas, 2008; Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999, and Wildhagen, 2009). However, it is often useful to look at the breadth of research in this important domain, since it does not rely upon individual projects which may have been executed in different ways. A meta-analysis by Xu and Hampden-Thompson (2012) found that across twenty-two Western countries, high levels of educational resources at home, cultural communication and cultural activities with parents all have a positive effect on attainment scores. Cultural capital in this study was measured by primary (cultural possessions and activity) and supplementary measures (home-based resources, opportunities to read books and cultural communication) which reinforces the cultural capital perspective and also captures the idea of cultural capital in a variety of ways (also see Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman, 2008). The idea of cultural capital is important

in investigating the important aspects of PIB (as perceived by students) in research aims one and two.

An additional criticism of the work of Bourdieu is that the distinctions between the classes have become blurred since his work in 1973 (as noted by Saunders, 1986; Bonner and DuGay, 1992 and Kellner, 1992) meaning that over time the effects of cultural capital on attainment could be reduced (Katz-Gerro, 2002). Alternatively, as suggested by Savage et al, (2013), the social class system is not diminishing but is changing or re-structuring.

Savage et al's (2013) study identified seven new classes, (discussed below) and argued that as well as determining economic capital, these classes identify with social and cultural capital in a similar way to the work of Bourdieu (2010). The categories were reported by Savage's team to be a more accurate reflection of contemporary society than previous notions and groups of class (e.g. such as the Registrars general employment categories, 1913 used to determine working and middle class attributes). The new scale by Savage and his team was developed from the most recent large-scale study of its kind, involving more than 161,000 people and was publicised to be the most recent reliable model which reflects 7 current socio-economic status types within the UK (Savage et al, 2013). The names of these social-class groups are (in ascending order): 'Precariat', 'Emergent service workers', 'Traditional working class', 'New affluent workers', 'Technical middle class', 'Established middle class' and 'Elite'.

Interestingly, in relation to the current study, Bourdieu discovered that the strong correlation between academic gains and social class evident at primary and secondary levels is likely to decline at university level but does not specifically mention college (i.e. 16+ level). He also recognises the power of children's ambitions and expectations which are likely to have been internalised through parental interactions. Despite his findings relating to social and cultural capital, Bourdieu does not underestimate the influence of good schooling for future success of students. He suggests that lower-class students occasionally are able to compensate for

their lack of cultural capital by acquiring school-based cultural capital in the form of intellectual ability, unusual social circumstances or individual effort and drive.

Lareau (2011) builds upon the idea of social capital developed by Bourdieu (1977). She believes that middle and upper-class parents engage with their children in activities which are highly structured, termed ‘concerted cultivation’ which encourages attitudes, skills and behaviours that result in higher academic achievement. In her American study Lareau (2011) suggests that middle and upper-class parents converse extensively with their children, have more involvement with school in terms of discussing the child’s progress and encouraging children to engage in certain extra-curricular leisure activities. These behaviours are considered to cultivate children’s dispositions where children are encouraged to feel ‘entitlement’ which results in them having a highly developed sense of self in which they are academically able. This has implications for intrinsic motivation and self-expectation and is important to consider when identifying perceptions of students and whether they identify aspects relating to entitlement when reviewing and analysing the student data. Lareau (2011) also observed that middle and upper-class parents, through selection of activities and attitudes, subtly guide their children into friendship groups with children from like-minded families: ones which cultivate the same middle-class attitudes and behaviours as their own (i.e. the importance of education and engagement in extra-curricular activities).

‘Academic Socialisation’ and ‘Concerted Cultivation’ (as described by Baumrind (1967) and Lareau (2011), respectively) are important to consider when understanding the influences of language on children’s later abilities and skills. Taylor, Clayton and Rowley (2004) noted that the different ways that parents engage and talk about education and learning with their children represents a connection between the two perspectives of ‘what parents do’ and ‘who parents feel they are’ (as explained in section 2.1). Taylor, Clayton and Rowley (2004) describe ‘Academic Socialisation’ as representing an umbrella of socio-economic and cultural contexts which connects who parents feel they are and (through this), identifies what parents do (i.e. their individual behaviours).

Communication is an important aspect of parental involvement. Conversation between parent and child is viewed to be a core component of Academic Socialisation where parents give students a sense of entitlement but also engage children through conversing extensively with them. However, length of conversation is not the only influencing factor for influencing future educational attainment. Indeed, the quality of conversation between parent and child is deemed to be of most importance and Taylor, Clayton and Rowley (2004) suggest that most research into parental home involvement focuses on the quality of language stimulation which is categorised by use of explicit literacy-promoting behaviours (see Christian, Bachnan and Morrison, 2001) which relate to the features of academic socialisation and concerted cultivation.

Quality of conversation was identified and studied by Bernstein (1971), specifically in relation to the register with which speech is given by different social classes. He devised a theory in relation to the patterns of language by use of 'codes' stating that there were two main codes used in the English Language which were used differently based on whether the conversers were middle or working-class. The elaborate code was educationally advantageous for a number of reasons and is seen to be used by the middle classes specifically. The elaborate code uses correct articulation in Standard English, along with a wide vocabulary where language is used successfully to support reasoning and construction of arguments. It uses formal language including a higher level of subordinate clauses, adjectives and passive tenses. It could be argued that Bernstein's work can be linked with Bourdieu's ideas as it focuses on elaborated codes which is associated with the middle classes. With the idea of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2010), the elaborate code is reproduced within families and becomes a form of capital that children can use to maintain their successes, particularly within education which often is judged by use of such a code. Middle class children are therefore seen to have an advantage as they enter school as they have been socialised into the elaborate code and so have an educational advantage. This can also relate to the idea of trajectories that middle-class children can be placed on due to the capital that they are in

receipt of (see Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried, 2013). The middle classes, however, do not only have the advantage of using the elaborate code to be successful within education but are also aware and have use of the restricted code which means they are also advantaged because they have the ability to use both codes where necessary. The restricted code, Bernstein (1971) suggested, could be used by both the working and middle classes. However (as its name suggests) it relates to a restricted speech register which is likely to be used by the working classes. The language for the restricted code is informal and lacks stylistic range. It is reliant on context for meaningfulness. It stresses group membership but is highly predictable. It features over use of pronouns, tag questions and gestures to convey meaning rather than more complex language structures meaning that it is more likely to reflect the linguistic patterns of working-class families. According to Bernstein, the working-class are likely to use the restrictive code where meaning is often inferred or implied and so relies on speakers having a shared culture or context. Users of the restrictive code are likely to be restricted both in their language use and in their potential to attain highly within education because education is more likely to involve communication using an elaborate code. Bernstein (1971) points out that, although the working class use a restricted code and so limit themselves on performance in language-based subjects, they can achieve as highly as the middle classes for mathematical based subjects which often do not require the use of the elaborate code to aid understanding within the educational context. This is particularly useful to consider when exploring the attainment for different courses within the FE College under scrutiny, since in Bernstein's (1971) view, certain language-based assessed courses may favour students who are able to swap codes and is likely to apply to most middle-class children (giving them an educational advantage) whereas practical assessment is less likely to use the elaborate code. Although on the surface, Bernstein's work appears similar to Bourdieu's, there are some distinct differences, as highlighted by Harker and May (1993). Firstly, the concepts of codes bears some relation to Bourdieu's notion of habitus. However, Bernstein's work has a much narrower focus. Bernstein suggests that Bourdieu's work looks at how power relations in relation to class and capital are carried by the system but that he is

not so concerned with the description of the carrier, whereas Bernstein looks in detail at the specifics of language use within a clear code. Bernstein, however, is criticised for the non-generalisability of this work, since it focuses on a set of codes. Bourdieu, however notes that social agents are not likely to obey rules and that strategy, structure and agency within social practices are more authentic, in contrast to the formal idea of the rules of the codes (Harker and May, 1993). Indeed, Bernstein's (1971) different linguistic codes have received a mix of responses within academia (see Jones, 2013 who reviews the collective critical response to Bernstein).

Another critique of Bernstein's work is that the social class system in modern-day society is more complex than simply 'working' and 'middle' class. As argued earlier by Savage et al, (2013) there are now seven distinct social classes which are based on a number of factors. Production of this new scale is likely to challenge the notions of the 'elaborate' and 'restricted' code because the distinctions between the seven classes are finer than the broad categories of the 'working' and 'middle' classes. However, although Savage et al's (2013) work identified modern complexities in relation to the distinctions between the classes, this work is now five years old and the seven new categories have not been universally adopted. It can therefore be argued that it has not made a significant difference to how the working and middle classes are viewed.

Bernstein appears to favour or give privilege to users of Standard English and not take account of regional/local dialects or accents when referring to the establishment of elaborate or restricted codes. Hughes, Trudgill and Watt (2013) report that a relationship between social class and accent/dialect does exist. They claim that where an individual is higher up the social scale, they are likely to have a less regionally marked accent. Standard English is likely to be associated with high prestige. Crystal (2010) on the other hand, although not explicitly challenging Bernstein on his views surrounding elaborate and restricted codes, does challenge the notion of Standard English having inherently greater capacity for conceptualisation vis-à-vis other dialects. His book 'The Cambridge Encyclopedia of

Language' asserts that the choice of Standard English as a privileged dialect is political, rather than linguistic. To be clear, he is not suggesting that children should not learn Standard English from a social and educational perspective but that regional dialects do have the ability to convey complex ideas, as do users of Standard English. However, Standard English does vary according to the region of the world in which it is spoken. Bernstein's work is important to understand in relation to the current study because language use is seen as a component of concerted cultivation – a well-researched parental involvement trait (see Lareau (2011) referred to earlier in this section) where language stimulation, literacy promoting behaviours and the quality of conversation are seen as fundamental in encouraging positive educational values.

2.2.3 External influences: Ecological Systems

This section will tease out the importance of looking at a mixture of external factors which can influence individuals and their attainment. Social interactions within the family have been viewed to be important for an individual's development of self-concept (Mead, 1934) and motivation through observation (Bandura, 1976) as well as influenced by socio-cultural aspects such as social class, cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2010) and the linguistic differences of codes which are related to class (Bernstein, 1971). However, adolescents' development also can be unpredictable within the 'identity versus role confusion' stage, as identified by Erikson (1995). However, the notion of 'the family' is likely to be influenced by external factors and, as individuals reach the stages of adolescence, it may be more likely that their views, development, skills and motivation are shaped by wider factors which can affect their attainment, as well as aspects of parental involvement and upbringing. It is therefore important to acknowledge that parental involvement behaviours and values are shaped by family history and cultural differences, even if it is difficult to pinpoint or detect individual influences. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems theory highlights the potential influences on a child's development and is particularly useful when reviewing parental involvement and the influencing factors for academic success. The first system in the

Ecological Systems theory is the Microsystem which includes the influences of family, peers and teachers/lecturers through observing behaviours and relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Importantly, an individual is not just viewed to be a recipient of the microsystem environment but also as a contributor to it. This is important, since parental involvement is a reciprocal process (i.e. the parent can influence the child, but the child can also influence the parenting behaviours – see section 2.3.3) and the levels of responsiveness for both parent and child are important to consider here. The second system (Meso) shows that a child can be influenced by how elements within the microsystem interact with each other (i.e. the relationships between family, teachers and peers). The Exo-system regards how institutions and policies (i.e. external decisions) may influence children through educational settings or family (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), such as RPA of compulsory education or a change in parental involvement due to parental work commitments increasing due to parental promotion. The Macro-system looks broadly at the influences of social and cultural values. In terms of parental involvement, this is important because ethnic differences, cultural variations and patterns of values and beliefs may impact the level and type of parental involvement or parental behaviours which affect student attainment and so are important to consider for the current study in relation to attainment. Taylor, Clayton and Rowley (2004) praise the use of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory to identify a 'myriad of intrafamilial and extrafamilial factors' (e.g. family, parents, teachers and wider socio-cultural values) which operate in determining children's developmental trajectories (Taylor, Clayton and Rowley, 2004, p.163) and note that recognising these different factors is useful in capturing the interplay between these factors which is crucial in responding to research aims one, two, three and four. However, although Bronfenbrenner's theory offers a holistic approach to recognition of a number of influences and sees each individual as unique, it is difficult to pinpoint the effects of these influences in practice. Firstly, the theory is extremely broad – every detail of every system could play a role in an individual's development, but which aspects should be included or excluded when determining influence is not clear. In the same vein, there appears to be no hierarchical structure within the theory, leading to a

situation where it is difficult to dissect the strengths of different influences upon individuals. However, in spite of these criticisms it is beneficial in considering Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory for the current study for these reasons:

1) It shows a holistic approach to identifying all the different influences for individuals when considering their attainment and therefore indicates the relevance and importance of parental involvement whilst recognising that other factors may play a part in influencing outcomes.

2) It acknowledges not only that there are many distinct external factors that can influence individuals but that these factors within the microsystem can work together and interact with each other (e.g. there may be potential positive and negative effects of the relationships between the family, educational institution and peers which are useful to consider when investigating the effects of parental involvement behaviours).

2.3 Existing research into PIB

A review of existing parental involvement research projects was undertaken so that the current study could reflect, adapt and build on existing ideas in fulfilling all four of its research aims. However, the review of parental involvement studies has shown that research projects into parental involvement are not directly comparable. Firstly, different researchers have identified different *types* of parental involvement. Secondly, these are likely to have been *measured* differently, both in terms of involvement and attainment. Thirdly, studies have involved students of different *ages* and have often overlooked students in adolescence (particularly over the age of 16). Fourthly, these studies have largely been carried out in the USA and none have been found to be conducted in UK FE colleges.

Due to the lack of studies into parental involvement and attainment in the UK, most of the studies reviewed in this section were conducted abroad, predominantly in the USA. As the studies reviewed did not have common ground (i.e. different ages of participants, definitions of parental involvement, measures for attainment, research tools, participant numbers and

educational systems) it was difficult to analyse their findings in comparison to each other and so overall conclusions drawn from them must be tentative. For the most part, this literature review has focused on parental involvement involving secondary-school aged students. Additionally, Fan and Chen (2001), assert that most literature preceding 2001 regarding parental involvement is non-empirical. Those studies that have sought to investigate this area quantitatively have indicated great inconsistency in findings, as reported by Fan and Chen (2001).

In this section, the problem of causation (also called the reactive hypothesis) is discussed, since researchers investigating parental involvement must be aware of the potential dangers of interpreting associations to be “cause and effect” which can ultimately jeopardise the conclusions drawn from research into this area (Greene, 2015).

As well as reviewing primary research in this section and to tease out specific associations between parental behaviours and attainment, it was also useful to look at secondary research (i.e. research that summarises, collates and synthesises existing research). Two secondary research projects were of particular interest. Firstly, a cross-national analysis report for parental involvement and attainment by Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman (2013) was reviewed and secondly a meta-analysis which reviewed seventy-five studies conducted in the past fifteen years was explored and reported by Boonk, et al, (2018). These were useful to include because they were able to show overall trends and findings for parental involvement and associations with attainment.

Section 2.3 primarily concentrates on studies involving adolescent children but also includes longitudinal studies which have tracked parenting behaviours throughout childhood and into adolescence (section 2.3.5). This was important to review, since the current project specifically asks students about whether their parental involvement has changed over time and asks them to reflect on which aspects of PIB are important or problematic which can be influenced by their past experiences (which relates to research aim one).

2.3.1 An overview of studies

Recent primary studies (i.e. studies which generate their own data) into parental involvement for adolescents have differed in terms of participant choice (i.e. parent, student or teacher), data gathering techniques, data analysis techniques and the way in which parental involvement was measured in terms of the scale used. It is necessary to identify the conceptual frameworks within which much of the work on parenting styles has been executed so that it can be compared and contrasted to the current study and can offer insights into effective ways of working. Additional information can be gleaned about common themes and ideas which relate to PIB and attainment for adolescent students.

The majority of studies mentioned in this section have been chosen due to their focus on measuring parental involvement and/or attainment. Published research into parental involvement behaviours as perceived by Further Education students could not be found within the UK, hence the decision to explore projects from abroad. A lack of published research in Further Education in the UK also forms the justification for research choice in respect to originality of the project. However, it is important to acknowledge that although most parental involvement research has been completed in the USA, there is one UK project that has looked at parental involvement which has links with the current project. The longitudinal study by Hango (2007) found that parental *interest* for students aged sixteen had the largest *direct impact* on educational outcomes for British children and not active hands-on homework help. These findings, along with many other parental involvement projects are displayed on the following pages in Table 2.1 which reviews the researchers and location, conclusions/findings, additional factors (i.e. age, gender, ethnicity) studied, participants/stage of education/sampling, measures of attainment, research tools and measures/constructs of PIB, data types, processing/analysis and the research paradigm for studies with a similar focus to the current project. All research projects in Table 2.1 are based on primary (i.e. direct, data-generating) research. A critique of both methodological and theoretical considerations is then offered beneath the table and choices for the current

study are justified. Projects involving secondary research are included in more detail in section 2.3.2.

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) ***USA***	Academic instruction and academic socialisation are important. Socialisation can positively influence attainment at all levels. Instruction is more likely to positively influence attainment in reading in early childhood but show little effect for attainment in adolescence. Parents set their children on an academic trajectory in early childhood.	Not specified as a focus of the study	Mother and children (ages 3-17) (longitudinal study) Children aged 16-17 years old were asked to complete a survey 122 children involved and their mothers	Reading tests	Direct observation and semi-structured interview with mother: Measures differed with age but were taken from the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) inventory (Bradley and Caldwell, 1984) and were scored on a yes/no basis. Early childhood measures: mother helps child to: read colours, learn spatial relationships, learn numbers, learn a few words, learn shapes, mother reads to the child. Adolescence measures: Mother: works on academic skills, discusses school activities and events, has educational expectations.	Confirmatory factor analysis Cronbach Alpha Positivism

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Dumont et al (2014) ***Germany***	Responsive parents provide structure, but parental involvement may not be beneficial for academic development. Students with low achievement at ages 10-11 reported more control at age 12-13.	Not specified	Involved 2,830 students (ages 10-13) and their parents across 86 secondary schools	Academic functioning (measured by effort, procrastination and reading achievement)	Student and parent questionnaires Measures were based on the quality of homework interaction using 3 dimensions proposed by self-determination theory: (1) Parental control (pressure, intrusiveness and dominance) e.g. "my parents help me even when I don't need help" (2) Parental responsiveness, e.g. "my parents help me with homework if I ask them to" (3) Parental structure (parental guidance) e.g. "my parents make sure I have enough time and space" Responses were based on a 4-point Likert scale.	Factor analysis (FA) Structural equation modelling (SEM) Positivism

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Hango (2007) ***UK***	Overall finding: Parental involvement in children matters in relation to well-being and qualifications gained. It was found that at age 16, the strongest predictor for attainment was both father and mother's interest in education. The study was only conducted on children whose parents were together in a nuclear family.	Parental involvement was explored across different ages in this longitudinal study. Data was gathered when children were age 7, 11, 23, 33 and 42.	Number of participants that were involved in the data collection at age 11 and age 16: 2,658. Educational stage: school, university and beyond Participants were children born within the same week in 1958 and their parents and teachers.	Dichotomy of: No educational qualifications at age 33 And Educational qualifications at age 33	PIB was measured differently at different ages and by different people involved in the child's life. At age 11, parental interest in education was gathered from teacher responses as well as parent responses. The question to parents was "How often do you take your child on walks, outings, picnics and visits?" At age 16, teachers were again asked about the parents' level of interest in the child's education. Students themselves were then asked about how well they felt they got on with their mother and father.	Positivist Purely quantitative data Logistic Regression models were used

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Dubose et al (2014) ***USA***	Overall finding: Students with parents who are involved in some way, are more successful, even at university level (this can relate to emotional support, signposting or being willing to have conversations)	Not specified	No. of participants: 121. They were from universities and colleges and were aged 18+. Student perceptions was the focus. Gatekeepers led course programmes. Chosen for their locality	Was focused purely on exploring perceptions	Electronic survey. Frequency of communication/ involvement as perceived by students using a Likert scale: “very involved,” “involved,” “slightly involved,” or “not involved at all.” Limited to 3 categories. Students also asked about parental guidance in relation to applying for a course for which the categories were; ‘not involved’, ‘called me when letter came through’, ‘helped me get references’, ‘coached me for an interview’, ‘signposted me’ and ‘accompanied me to campus’. Students were also asked about age, sex, gender, financial help and support in raising a grievance against the institution.	SPSS software version 20 Descriptive statistics Chi-square analysis were used to explore data Positivism

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) ***USA***	Home-involvement, school-involvement and academic socialisation were explored in relation to achievement and mental health. Frequency of parental involvement improved academic and emotional functioning (mental health) for adolescent students (ages 15-17). Involvement reported when students were 15/16 was associated with student attainment at age 16/17.	Participants were split into African American, European-American Other	A total of 1,056 students aged 15-17 and their parents Ten high schools chosen for convenience. Money offered for taking part. Three waves of data collection. Both students and parents were surveyed	GPA An average of grades in core academic subjects. A = 5 points, B = 4 points	. PIB was viewed as school-based involvement, home-based involvement and academic socialisation. Used 5-point Likert scales. Student surveys. measures: 'academic engagement' using the 'behavioural engagement scale' (Connell and Wellborn, 1991) which relates to whether the student gets their work done on time/skips class and 'emotional engagement' using the 'school emotional engagement scale' (Gottfredson 1984) where students were asked about feelings of interest, enjoyment, value of education. Telephone interviews with parents: Home-based involvement scale assessed parents and structured home-time study. School-based involvement scale included school events and volunteering. The academic socialisation scale measured the extent to which parents report to communicate educational goals, values, aspirations and discuss future career plans	Quantitative data Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Chi-squared difference test Standard deviations Bivariate correlations Positivism

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Blair (2014) ***USA and the Philippines***	Indirect parent involvement (i.e. development of expectations, aspirations) was associated with higher grades	Filipino parents were compared to parents in the USA.	Parents and 2,102 children aged 10-12. Nine schools randomly selected. Students took paper copies of a survey home to their parents.	Parents provided information on children's grades (Ds or lower) (Cs) (Bs) (As).	Parental surveys. Measured parents' level of education Gathered yes/no responses in relation to the following: homework rules, visits to a museum or library with child, PTA involvement and volunteering. Parents were asked how frequently they helped their children with homework using a 4-point Likert scale: 1=not at all, 2=rarely, 3=occasionally, and 4=regularly	Ordinary least squares regression models Beta values Positivism

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Robinson and Harris (2014) ***USA***	The involvement of parents for adolescents over 16 can be harmful and can result in lower grades. Parents engage in stage setting where they have high expectations and then step back.	Asian, Hispanic, White, Black	Focus groups (University of Texas) (age 18+) with 30 students initiated the project Parents of students (aged 13-18 years) answered surveys (12,144 participants)	Test scores (exam) for English and maths	Focus groups with students and parental surveys with dichotomous variables (i.e. yes/no or regularly/not regularly) In total 63 different measures were used. These methods were specifically limited to parental activities that require parents to communicate the values of education to their child through a number of means. Examples are: Reading to their child or encouraging reading, discussing school experiences/school reports, helping with homework or rules for completing homework, volunteering within schools, discussing aspirations for the future and further study.	Quantitative data analysed using regression Positivism

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Gordon and Cui (2013) ***USA***	Positive parenting behaviours during adolescence influenced students' careers outcomes	White (reference category), African American, Hispanic, Asian, and 'others'.	A total of 20,745 school-aged students aged 12-18 took part representing 132 schools. Sampling was seen to be nationally represented through the "add health" school based longitudinal study	Outcomes were not measured as grades but were related to income, career satisfaction, career autonomy and career commitment.	Students were asked about their PIB. Responses were averaged across both parents. Behaviours included: communication (talking to students about work or grades), expectation (asking whether parents would be disappointed if they did not pass their college course) and support (how close do students feel to their parents, do their parents care about them?). Sub-scales were standardised/averaged to create a 'score' for positive parenting.	Statistical Software package Stata. Multiple regressions. R-squares for assessing the models. Positivism

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Chen and Ho (2012) ***Taiwan***	Work done in universities found that parents can initiate and develop student motivation through communication of educational values	n/a	A total of 468 university students (aged 18 years +) Students in Taiwan (first year degree students)	GPA	Survey questionnaire given to students about their PIB which measured 12 items with a 5-point Likert scale. The items were taken from three different existing scales: (1) The 'Parental Value subscale' (Paulson, 1994) where students were asked about their parents' values/attitudes regarding effort and success. (2) 'Parents' Interests in Schoolwork Subscale' (Paulson, 1994) measures the degree to which parents are knowledgeable about grades and learning. (3) Wang and Heppner's (2002) Living up to Parental Expectation Inventory (LPEI) measured students' perceptions of parental expectations for academic performance and career pursuit.	SEM Cronbach's alpha The Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) software package 17.0 was used Positivism

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Ceballo et al (2012) ***USA***	In poor Latino families, parental involvement (academic socialisation and school involvement) has positive associations with attainment, mother's educational aspirations, respect, expectations, values and school effort).	Dominican and Puerto Rican. Other ethnicities reported were Colombian, Cuban, and Mexican.	A total of 223 school-aged students in the stage of adolescence (age 14-15) 3 schools in north eastern USA in low income urban neighbourhoods.	The study did not use objective measures of test scores or grades.	Student self-report questionnaire. First set of items was drawn from the Educational Socialization Scale (ESS; Bempechat, Graham and Jimenez, 1999) and included communication of parental values and beliefs about education and reactions to children's academic performance. Second set of items was from the Parent School Involvement Scale (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch and Darling (1992) and included parental involvement in school-work and school activities. Third set of items was taken from the 'Parental Involvement in Education Scale' (Cooper and Crosnoe, 2007) and included frequency of contact with teachers/school committees. The fourth set was designed for the study and included items relating to parental use of emotional support.	Exploratory factor analysis Regression analysis Cronbach's Alpha Positivism

Table 2.1: An overview of studies

Researchers and *location* of study	Conclusions & findings relating to parental behaviours	Exploration of ethnicity/ gender/ age	Participants/ educational stage/sample	Measures of attainment	Research tools and measures or constructs/scales used to identify PIB	Data types, analysis and research paradigm
Lam and Ducreux (2013) ***USA***	Highlighted the association between parent-child communication and student attainment	Caucasian/ White Hispanic/ Latino Native American	A total of 32 parents of middle school students (ages 11-14) School was specially selected due to its diversity, location and size.	Academic achievement measured by a review of students' GPAs as on their report cards.	Questionnaire given to parents 51 questions were asked, and responses were categorised by a 5-point Likert scale. Items came from the 'Inventory of Parental Influence' (Parent Version; Campbell, 1994) The items measured: (1) Levels of parental pressure and support (2) Parental help, monitoring, and press for literacy (3) Communication between parent and student	Pearson's R correlations were used to determine associations between GPA and each type of parental involvement Means, Standards deviations Cronbach's Alpha Positivism

The findings from the eleven studies presented in table 2.1 are discussed below in two ways. The first is methodological and the second relates to key areas of interest. The methodological choices for the current project include the measures/constructs for PIB and are discussed in section 2.3.1.1. The key areas of interest are segregated into two categories: 'active homework help' and 'parental interest' since these were key themes in the literature that were identified as important to focus on when investigating PIB which relate to research aims one and two and are explained in section 2.3.1.2.

2.3.1.1 Methodological choices

At first glance, Robinson and Harris' (2014) study along with Wang and Sheikh-Khalil's (2014) work were most similar to the current study in that they:

a) identified student perceptions of parental behaviours

b) sought to explore associations between reported behaviours and attainment

c) used a mix of tools to gain information.

However, these studies fail to identify the qualities of parental interactions (i.e. through qualitative data) as they appear to have been instigated within a firmly positivist stance which gathered numerical data, even though they used a mix of research tools. These studies failed to fully communicate recognition of using positivist practices and did not acknowledge their ontological stance nor recognise the limitations of using purely quantitative data. It might be that interpretivist elements could have been used more effectively in the existing studies to gain a deeper understanding of the quality of parental-child interactions and it is important to consider this limitation when making methodological choices for the current study.

For the most part, investigation of perceptions relating to parental involvement and attainment have been executed in the USA and have predominantly used positivist conceptual frameworks through which to gather information. Researchers sought to gather

information involving associations between student/parent perceptions of parenting practices and student attainment and often reported their findings implying ‘cause and effect’, which relates to the problem of causation, discussed in section 2.3.3. Robinson and Harris (2014) have been criticised for the suggestion that an increase in parental involvement can result in lower grades for students.

As well as acknowledging the reactive hypothesis and the problem of causation, all findings relating to perceptions need to be viewed with caution, since perceptions are socially constructed and the way in which they are developed, understood and communicated may differ from real, lived experiences and should be taken as a reflection of reality and not a reproduction of reality. However, existing studies within the area of parental involvement reflect positivist practices and appear to adopt a realist ontological position.

Measures and constructs for PIB

The studies reviewed in table 2.1 indicate that there is no standard way in which PIB is measured. All projects featured have measured PIB using different items and questions and have focused on different areas of involvement. As an example, Dumont et al, (2014) looked at control, responsiveness and guidance but failed to acknowledge the influences of expectations, aspirations and values. Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) looked at structured learning and rule setting within the home, where the majority of other studies overlooked this aspect. Many studies relied upon or adapted scales from the 1990s to measure PIB. However, there are a number of key themes that have come out of this review in relation to ways of measuring or constructing parental behaviours. These are split into two different categories. Home-based PIB and institution-based PIB. Table 2.2 below shows all the different ways PIB can be measured:

Table 2.2: Home-based and institution-based measures of PIB

Home-based PIB	Institution-based PIB
Pressure or control	Contact with teachers
Surveillance/monitoring	School volunteering or helping with PTA
Reactions to student performance	Involvement in school activities
Support through help or advice	Contact about school problems
Communication	
Parent-child relationship quality	
Parental values for education	
Emotional support	
Expectations and aspirations for future	
Discussing learning	
Helping with homework	
Setting rules for homework	
Visiting places of interest	
Guidance	
Signposting	
Showing interest	
Responsiveness	

2.3.1.2 Key areas of interest

Active homework help

Research where negative associations between involvement and attainment have been found are primarily based on 'active' hands-on homework help, as can be seen directly below. Student motivation and academic achievement in adolescents was found by Coleman (2009) to decrease if the *amount* of parental involvement increased during these years with

homework. The study involved 9,080 students and their parents. Similarly, Bagby and Sulak, (2015) reported that parental involvement in the form of 'homework help' does not necessarily correlate with achievement for older students, finding no clear significant links between the two. This finding was also echoed by Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman (2013) and is referred to in detail in section 2.3.2.

Likewise, an American study by Robinson and Harris (2014) conducted research into parental involvement with homework and looked at 63 measures of involvement. They found that, in general, parental involvement is not correlated positively with academic achievement and concluded that the involvement of parents at middle school and beyond can, in fact, be harmful. Goldstein (2014) has described Robinson and Harris' work as the largest ever study of its kind which has sought to match parental involvement to student attainment. Research began when Robinson was conducting informal focus groups with students at the University of Texas and found that many of his students had mothers and fathers with high expectations that were clearly set, but that they stepped back to allow their child to develop and learn autonomously. Goldstein (2014) applauds the work of Robinson and Harris (2014), agreeing that the U.S. government and its expenditure on getting parents involved may be a waste of time. She suggests that this work has highlighted a need to question whether parental involvement does always produce high gains for students and that the findings may bring a relief to parents who are anxiously struggling to make time to become actively involved in their child's education.

However, overall, this work by Robinson and Harris (2014) has received much criticism. Greene (2015), criticises the lack of consideration of the notion of causation arguing that parents may only become involved in a child's education if the parents perceive that their child is failing or struggling and that the apparent correlation in this research is, in fact, not demonstrating an effect of involvement, but more likely is affected in itself by prior achievement. This causation problem and the idea that children influence parental behaviours has also been identified in recent years by Farkas (2014), Sy, Gottfried and

Gottfried (2013), Ciping et al, (2015), Shumow (2014), Yurk Quadlin (2015), Hamlin (2014) and Hoglund et al (2015). Greene (2015) discusses his concern that this research will be communicated to parents, sending out completely the wrong message about their need to support students with homework. Farkas (2014), whilst praising much of the research structure and methodology in the Robinson and Harris study describes the finding that parental help with homework is seen to negatively affect achievement as “implausible” (Farkas, 2014, p987). Shumow (2014) suggests that Robinson and Harris (2014) have failed to adequately review parent involvement literature, particularly in overlooking much of the important work by Cooper in this area. Patall, Cooper and Robinson (2008) looked at homework, involvement and achievement and considered the students’ current grade level and the subject type studied. Robinson and Harris’ study does not distinguish between different courses as well as lacking consideration for different parenting styles and types of approaches to involvement in any detail.

Steinberg, Brown and Dornbusch (1996) indicated that school success and educational gains in adolescents is strongly associated with parenting styles, but this was not addressed by Robinson and Harris (2014). This complaint is also made by Hamlin (2014), who critiques their failure to account for parenting styles. Hamlin (2014) also states that holistically, the 63 measures used in the study show no direct relationship between parental involvement and student success and therefore this correlation is not negative but absent. Questions about the research tools are also apparent. Another complaint by Shumow (2014) is regarding the generality of Robinson and Harris’ (2014) measures of involvement with homework help being measured by a single item, with other questions being measured by simplistic 2-point response scales (i.e. Yes and no). He also asserts a need for control groups, which are also missing in Robinson and Harris’ (2014) study as well as disapproving of the lack of distinction between correlation and causation and implies that conclusions are drawn too casually. Robinson and Harris (2014) analysed their results using standard regression models. They asked questions about involvement only once throughout their study, despite

the study being reported as being ‘longitudinal’ and failed to measure responses in the interim between the beginning of the study and accessing student results at the end.

Shumow (2014) stresses that the work by Robinson and Harris is too simplistic to draw any useful conclusions and that, by focussing on direct effects only, it greatly misses an opportunity to fill any gaps in knowledge. To be useful, they should have asked questions of how, when and why and considered subject differences in their findings. Despite a wealth of criticism of their work, one useful idea that Robinson and Harris do offer relates to a new paradigm that they named as ‘stage setting’. ‘Stage setting’ (Robinson and Harris, 2014, p199) involves the production and maintenance of a ‘life space’ which is favourable to learning as well as parents setting high academic expectations. In effect, the social environment that is created enables academic success. They conclude that stage setting is one of the main contributors to student success (Robinson and Harris, 2014).

Conversely to the above, Patall et al, (2008) found that parental rule setting was most strongly correlated with positive outcomes in respect of helping with homework. This placed this strict parenting style above any alternate behaviour. Similarly, Huang and Gove (2015) discuss the authoritative parent style (characterised by a warm and firm approach with additional high expectations) that is related to higher academic achievement. In contrast, Ceballo et al, (2014) recognised that parents who offered educational advice in parent-child discussions related to better academic performance. Additionally, communication was a great source for positive in-home development for Latino students.

Parental interest

Parental behaviours relating to social and cultural communication were found to relate to higher levels of student literacy (attainment) and could be seen to be reflective of parent interest (Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman, 2013). They concluded that these kinds of communication positively affected child well-being. The National Child Development Study (NCDS) explored how the involvement of parents can affect achievement for literacy

and maths at age 16 and found that reported high levels of parental interest were linked to higher results in exams compared to parents who failed to take an interest in their children's learning (DCSF, 2008). Indeed, the DCSF (2008) claim: "Evidence indicates that parental involvement continues to have a significant effect on achievement into adolescence and even adulthood" (DCSF, 2008, p5). Similarly, Dubose et al, (2014) found that students with parents who show interest are more successful, even at university level. Chen and Ho (2012) also found a positive trend between parental emotional support within the home and student attainment.

2.3.2 Secondary research studies into parental involvement and attainment

The wealth of studies into parental involvement makes it difficult to draw out similarities and differences and common themes, as there is no agreement in how the concept of parental involvement with respect to attainment should be explored. It has therefore been useful to explore a recent large scale (secondary) research project which reviewed studies into parental involvement behaviours and academic attainment by Boonk et al (2018). This has been included due to its size and scale. The team reviewed seventy-five studies published since 2003 and found that there is much inconsistency between findings in these studies, despite their focus on the same topic. This is likely to be a result of inconsistent concepts of what parental involvement is and the lack of an agreed definition. They agreed that a meta-analysis in the field indicates statistically significant associations between involvement and attainment. The review was split into three different age groups: Early childhood (0-6 years), Elementary school (6-12 years) and middle school and beyond (12-18 years). From the broad grouping of 12-18 it was somewhat difficult to unpick the specific findings for college-aged students. However, for students in the highest age group, there were some clear distinctions between parental behaviours that associated positively or negatively with attainment. Table 2.3 on the following page shows these findings:

Table 2.3: Parental influences and associations with attainment for adolescent students

Positive relation with attainment for ages 12-18	Negative relation with/not related to attainment for ages 12-18
High parental expectations and aspirations Valuing academic attainment and reinforcing learning at home Academic encouragement and support Parent-child educational discussions	Academic pressure Parental control Interference with homework Homework related conflict Checking homework Controlling homework Helping with homework

Adapted from Boonk et al (2018, p.33)

It has been useful to explore data gathered from a cross-national analysis of parental involvement, which was completed by Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman (2013). This project investigated the effects of parental involvement across twenty-one countries and focussed on students within adolescence (age 15). Interestingly, this analysis segregated parental involvement into three types:

- Assistance with homework
- Social communication (eat a meal with parent/chat about general issues)
- Cultural communication (discussion of political or social issues, books or media)

The project sought to find out what effect different kinds of parental involvement had on 'student literacy', where data was gathered for reading, mathematics and science scores specifically (as this was seen to enable a better cross-national comparison than curricular data which may not be equivalent across countries). It found that assistance with homework related to *lower* student literacy scores for students aged fifteen. These findings are important to note, since many studies relating to parental involvement in childhood show that

instruction/assistance/hands-on help *are* useful to younger children, as the Boonk et al (2018) study found.

Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis with a slightly different topic focus. They decided to conduct a meta-analysis to enable synthesis of existing quantitative literature regarding this topic. They report that one of the main problems in this area of study is that the concept of 'parental involvement' was ill-defined and communicate their surprise at the lack of empirical studies in this area. Their results found that parental expectations had the strongest correlation with educational achievement but that "home-supervision" yields the weakest educational gain (Fan and Chen, 2001). This is similar to the findings by Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) and Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman, (2013) (in terms of active, hands-on help).

Fan, Williams and Wolters (2012) completed secondary research in the USA where they looked at five dimensions of parental involvement:

1) parental educational aspiration for their children's future education
2) parental advising
3) parental participation in school functions
4) parent–school contact concerning student problems
5) parent–school contact concerning school issues.

Overall, they found that parental advice (involvement) at all ages is linked to increased motivation. They used data from the Educational Longitudinal study of 2002 which included a total of 12,721 students (age 15-16) and their parents. They used random sampling techniques of adolescents at a national level and outcomes were studied not by attainment but in the form of intrinsic motivation of students. The project was wholly positivist and quantitative analysis included Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Cronbach's alpha and the use of weighted least squares estimations (WLSMV in Mplus).

2.3.3 The 'reactive hypothesis' and causation

The notion of causation has widely been identified as a problem in parental involvement research when considering attainment (e.g. Dumont et al, 2014; Greene, 2015; Farkas, 2014; Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried, 2013; Pomerantz and Eaton, 2001; Shumow, 2014 and Hamlin, 2014). Parental involvement is often displayed as a reaction to the child's previous academic success (Gronlnich et al, 2002; McNeal, 2012). The relationship between child and adult is a reciprocal one where each individual's feelings, thoughts, suggestions and implications can affect another's actions and behaviours. This creates a problem within this area of study. If a correlation is found between particular parenting styles and outcomes, it might be the case that one is a reaction of the other and not a cause. As an example, authoritarian style parenting may be linked to students who do not attain highly. Is it the case then that this parenting style has negative outcomes for the child, or is it that children who perform poorly are then subjected to a rigid 'hands on' approach from parents who are invoking a change in their child to initiate higher academic gains? Additionally, a highly performing student may report high parental expectations, but these may have been developed due to previous high outcomes, demonstrating that it is not the act of having high parental expectations in themselves that produce high academic outcomes. It has also been referred to as the *reactive hypothesis* (Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman, 2013; McNeal, 2012).

The studies reviewed below investigate whether associations exist between parental/carer involvement and attainment for students in the age of adolescence. Studies have revealed positive, negative or absent associations between attainment and involvement. This is likely to be as a result of the inconsistent measures for involvement and measures for student attainment. Additionally, when reviewing cross-national parental involvement literature, Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman (2013) note that one of the areas of research within parental involvement and attainment relates to the effect of race and gender

differences, which have been included as factors for the current study, along with age of student and course studied.

2.3.4 Factors affecting PIB and attainment

The involvement of parents was found to be affected by social class, poverty, health and perception of the parents' role in educational support (Desforges, 2003). However, the most influential socio-demographic and family-level factors on children's attainment have been found to be parental income and prior parental education. Feinstein, Duckworth and Sabates (2004) suggested that this is due to a high level of parental education being linked to positive parenting practices.

As previously mentioned, Bourdieu (2010) suggests that 'cultural capital' can be used to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children within different social classes, describing cultural capital to be the combination of innate property (i.e. what may be inherited by parents) with the merits of acquisition (i.e. what parents can offer their children; either in the sense of material gains or psychological gains) which can result in academic success.

Like Bourdieu (2010) Desforges (2003) found that social class was a strong predictor of parenting styles. However, specifically, Desforges (2003) found that maternal level of education as well as maternal psycho-social health were the strongest influences for both the form and extent of parental involvement. Family ethnicity was also found to affect involvement, but to a lesser degree than those factors mentioned above. Epstein (2007) suggests that regardless of student ability or age, parents who had an influencing role in the education of their children generated students who produced high academic gains. Conversely, Espinoza (2015) discusses a case where anxious parents at a private preparatory school have become overly controlling regarding the education of their children and need to become more detached to allow natural development and warned that parental aspirations had to be realistic. Thomas, Keogh and Hay (2015) interrogated data (in the form

of interviews) collected over 20 years and found that an overwhelming number of parents took responsibility for their children's educational success.

Interestingly, parental education has been found to have clear links with particular parenting styles. High levels of parental education are most likely to link with styles where parental warmth (characterised by tolerance/patience/love) is a key factor (Feinstein, Duckworth and Sabates, 2004). Suggestions for this are that higher achieving parents have had the opportunity to develop important attitudes and qualities such as tolerance (Feinstein, Duckworth and Sabates, 2004). In a study by Harding (2015) increasing parental education was found to correlate positively with an increase in children's cognition scores in pre-school and primary aged students. However, intelligence in itself, regardless of prior education has also been found to link to the quality of parenting that is exhibited in positive parent-child relationships (Feinstein, Duckworth and Sabates, 2004).

Muller (1993) found a negative association between school-related discussions with fathers for girls in relation to attainment but not for boys. She suggested that this may be due to fathers' involvement being in response to poor or weak school performance. It has also been posited that patterns of differences between the genders are dependent upon the subject matter (outcomes) under scrutiny (Mullis et al, 2000) which is important to note.

Robinson and Harris (2014), although widely criticised, found that no clear relationships existed between student success and parental involvement across race. In fact, in the literature review conducted by Robinson and Harris (2014), they failed to report the statistically significant results gained for different races of student in Jeynes' research (2007), nor do they consider his work on school-operated parental involvement programs which clearly link outcomes and parental involvement for minority ethnic students.

Findings by Gutman and Akerman (2008) found that Black Caribbean young people are less likely to progress as successfully as other ethnic groups, despite high parental and high pupil expectations. This finding is also supported by Rollock et al, (2015) who found that Black

children with professional middle-class parents still underachieve, which suggests that it is not parental involvement or class which is at fault but other school related factors. Similarly, Curtis and Pettigrew (2009) reported that Asian (primarily Indian) students in British education systems appear to achieve more highly than African-Caribbean students and note that the parents of Indian children are more likely to have been educated at a higher level than African-Caribbean parents, since the Indian heritage population in Britain is more likely to reflect higher socio-economic classes. They note that social class remains a key influence for academic attainment in British society. However, Wang and Sheikh-Khalil's (2014) American study as described above also looked at ethnicity by comparing parental involvement and student outcomes for European-American and African-American families but failed to find any difference in correlations between ethnic groups, parenting styles and subsequent attainment.

At-home support in England was found to have a significant positive impact on achievement, with the scale of this effect apparent over all ethnic groups (Desforges, 2003). However, a recent study found that the types of home support and parenting practices differed between ethnic groups. Hill and Wang's (2015) work in the USA involved children aged 11-18 years. Parental 'monitoring' was seen to produce higher results (through looking at GPA: Grade Point Averaging) for African-American students whereas autonomy support produced a higher student GPA for European-Americans (Hill and Wang, 2015).

The influences of high academic expectations have been studied and reported widely (e.g. Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968; Davis-Kean, Vida and Eccles, 2001; Hill and Tyson, 2009; Chen and Ho, 2012; Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried, 2013; Briley, Harden and Tucker-Drob, 2014; Kim, 2014; Ceballo et al, 2014; Huang and Gove, 2015; Bagby and Sulak, 2015 and Flouri et al, 2015). These studies highlight the importance of high expectations and the sense of fulfilment for high achievement as regulated by individuals. Similarly, Bandura writes: "adults who subscribe to high standards of accomplishment expect children to excel in whatever academic subjects they are pursuing" (Bandura, 1976, p.139). This research

clearly highlights the importance of high adult expectations and high aspirations for children and is useful in helping to explore whether these connections are perceived as occurring in students' experiences.

High aspirations and the development of children's early self-concept (beliefs that students construct about themselves developed through interactions with others) have been found to be key factors for successful parenting practices with regard to education and achievement and importantly, the extent of involvement is strongly affected by the child's willingness to receive support with the child developing a highly active mediating role (Desforges, 2003). Interestingly, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) suggest that parental involvement is dependent on three factors: (a) parents' role-construction where parents form beliefs about their own roles within the education of their child, (b) the extent to which parents believed their influence would help their child in attaining more highly and (c) parents' perception of how involved both their children and educational establishments wish them to be. Darnell (2012) argued that parental involvement is characterised by two factors: (a) the parents' drive to be involved and (b) how much the child is willing for the parents to be involved. These two factors may indeed affect the other. Parental drive is likely to be encouraged by the child's need for support just as it may be discouraged by a child who displays high independence and does not communicate willingness for parental support. Indeed, this dynamic relationship is ever changing and growing and must be identified as such for the purposes of understanding the context of parental involvement.

Expectations, aspirations and values are a core part of the current investigation into PIB and relate to research aims one, two and three. Expectations, aspirations and values are featured in the PIB statements (see section 3.1.2.1). Responses to these statements will be used to establish whether there are any associations with student attainment. The power of expectations in producing educational gains has been widely documented across a broad range of ages of children (e.g. Fan and Chen, 2001; Juang and Silbereisen, 2002; Desforges, 2003; Ceballo et al, 2014; Bagby and Sulak, 2015; and Boonk et al, 2018). In

fact, parental positive educational attitudes, values and aspirations are likely to benefit student outcomes more than other factors, Desforges (2003) argues. Similarly, Fan and Chen (2001) report that parental aspirations appeared to be the strongest predictor when considering factors that affect academic achievement. Importantly, Robinson and Harris (2014) identified that students appreciated parental support which was perceived as 'general interest in their life overall, rather than a pressure to do well' (Robinson and Harris, 2014, p202). They also maintain that positive labels and reinforcement in terms of academic identity were seen as the most effective forms of parental involvement for academic success. Parental value of schooling and the successful communication of these values were also seen as integral to high academic outcomes. They suggest that successful communication of these values is measured by 'how deeply engrained the message is within the child's identity' (Robinson and Harris, 2014, p206).

A study (although dated) by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) which investigated the influence of teacher expectation on student achievement demonstrates the powerful effect expectations can have on performance. The educational psychology book entitled *"Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectation and Pupils' Intellectual Development"* (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968) describes many examples of self-fulfilling prophecies and the placebo effect. All children had an IQ test and the teacher was told of the "special children" in the class. These selected children were deemed to be entering a period of rapid intellectual growth. At the end of the year this group had their IQ measured again and as was predicted, each of them scored highly on the IQ test. This result, however, was not down to a period of intellectual growth that had been predicted but was actually as a consequence of teacher behaviour. Remarkably, the children had been selected at random. The apparent growth in IQ was down to an increase in teacher expectation for those particular children which altered the behaviour of the teacher. High expectation in itself had facilitated the advance in IQ. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968, p.176) write of their study: "Expectancy advantage was defined by the degree to which IQ gains by the 'special children'

exceeded gains by the control group children". Even more interesting was that results indicated that the older the children were, the more likely they were to maintain their teacher-responsive behaviour change autonomously. Indeed, these findings may have implications for the parent-child relationship. High expectation in this case resulted in an internal behaviour change within the child which resulted in improved outcomes. If the same were true for parental expectation and child motivation, these findings could prove of interest to many families. The finding that older children are more likely to maintain this positive behaviour change in response to a change in expectation supports arguments made by Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) who suggested that positive academic routes are produced for children by parents before they even enter school and that most of the factors that predict successful student outcomes are actually created in the home when the child is aged 0-4 years.

Interestingly, Ceballo et al, (2014) found that students who perceived their mothers to have high aspirations for them had positive associations with academic outcomes. Murayama et al, (2015) examined parental aspirations in relation to academic outcomes in maths for German pupils aged 11-16 and found that high academic aspirations only result in high attainment when those expectations were realistic and achievable. When parents pressurised their children too much, academic outcomes were lower. Murayama et al, (2015) suggested that too much pressure resulted in children experiencing anxiety along with frustration which also linked with low confidence. Taking this idea further, Bagby and Sulak (2015) argue that to be effective, parents must talk about the importance of education whilst encouraging student autonomy in reaching expectations. Robinson and Harris (2014) used focus groups and noted that students who appeared to do well had parents who communicated high expectations and then stepped back. Conversely, Froiland, Mayor and Herlevi (2015) found a surprising result where family motive (emphasis and encouragement in education) was negatively correlated with achievement, whereas student intellectual curiosity (i.e. intrinsic motivation) was seen to be an optimum behaviour in relation to high

attainment. Intrinsic motivation was also investigated by Ryan and Deci (2000) who found it to be a significant indicator for higher attainment. Similarly, parents whose parenting style fostered intrinsic motivation in students was more likely to create students who achieved high outcomes than students who relied on extrinsic forms of motivation, as identified by Fan, Williams and Wolters (2012) in their secondary research study. Could it be that parental involvement behaviours are limited in their effect on student attainment at age 16+ and that student curiosity is actually the key factor for academic drive? This is a key question to ask when reviewing data collected in this study.

Bagby and Sulak (2015) recognise the importance of high parental expectations but assert that they must be communicated supportively. Hill and Tyson (2009) expressed a need for positive parental involvement to include a communication between parent and child which involved expression of educational expectations and values where educational goals and learning strategies were discussed openly. This view was reported as a result of their secondary research (a meta-analysis). Indeed, it is important to note the distinction between authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles. As reported by Feinstein, Duckworth and Sabates (2004), authoritative parenting is a warm but firm parenting style with additional high expectations.

High expectations, though, must not be presumed to link with an excess of praise when forming children's self-concept. Suissa (2013) discusses the dangers of parents using too much praise where a child needs, craves and depends on praise for their motivation. 'Praise Junkies' (Suissa, 2013, p1) as she calls them, have a brain which has developed a chemical need for a constant reward. She argues that the focus needs to be shifted towards internal as opposed to external motivation. To be successful, the child must express their own feelings about their achievements and not rely on their parents' appreciation to develop their self-concept. This also links back to ideas developed within the introduction which discussed increase in student autonomy at post-16. Suissa's research has interesting implications when exploring positive parenting practices for students aged over sixteen. Similarly, high

expectation practices such as providing external rewards for good achievement or withholding items for poor performance can negatively affect outcomes. Students whose homework is not regulated at all by parents actually perform better than students whose parents impose measures as described above (Bagby and Sulak, 2015).

Parental expectations are linked to prior parental education as was found by Davis-Kean (2005). She discovered that parents who had higher success in education themselves tended to assume high achievement would result from their own children and that this would affect their parenting behaviour. Indeed Kim (2012) suggests that high maternal self-esteem is linked to high educational expectations in the child and can lead to higher cognitive ability. Expectations are likely to be internalised in a process Briley, Harden and Tucker-Drob (2014) call 'transmission' from parent to child. They are careful to consider expectations that can have a reciprocal effect between parent-child and child-parent. Although high expectations correlate with positive educational outcomes, child achievement also influences parental educational expectations in a process they call 'causal ambiguity' (Briley, Harden and Tucker-Drob, 2014). They also assert that children actually play an active role in determining the parenting that they receive.

Davis-Kean (2005) looked at how children's achievement was affected by parental expectations and found links between high socio-economic status and high expectations. Similar findings were apparent for Davis-Kean, Vida and Eccles (2001) who also found socio-economic status to be a significant predictor of parental expectations. High parental expectations were matched with children's positive perceptions regarding their ability and attainment (Davis-Kean, Vida and Eccles, 2001). When studying East Asian and Asian-American populations parental expectations were found to be a significant predictor for high performance and academic success (Chen and Ho, 2012). Interestingly, Flouri et al, (2014) found that white boys' aspirations developed through expectations communicated in child-parent relationships were more likely to be determined by socio-economic status than for non-white boys. In addition to this, Flouri et al, (2014) also found that high aspirations

developed through expectations supported within the child-parent relationship at age 7 were linked to family socio-economic status and ethnicity, but only for boys. Children reported to be from low socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to experience a wider gap between aspirations and achievement if they are female, rather than male (Gutman and Akerman, 2008). Dubose et al, (2014) found that female students communicated 20 percent more with parents than male learners and female students were found to report higher levels of parental involvement than their male counterparts, despite no significant differences between outcomes in respect of gender.

Unfortunately, no literature has been found regarding the associations between parental involvement, course, gender, or ethnicity specifically in the FE context when investigating student attainment and hence a gap in knowledge is apparent.

2.3.5 Parental involvement adaptations throughout childhood into adolescence

It is important to consider, as stated earlier, that parenting behaviours are likely to change over time. This section explores studies which have looked at parental behavioural influences throughout a child's life - both how they are likely to have changed with student age and how previous involvement may have affected student motivation and values for learning. Chen and Ho (2012) looked at parenting styles which promoted 'perceived academic control' (which encourages students to feel that they are capable of learning and that outcomes of schooling are not random but can be controlled) and the formation of a positive 'self-concept' within the student. They discovered a positive link between this type of approach and positive student outcomes (Chen and Ho, 2012, p316). This particularly needs to be emphasised with regards to FE and HE where student autonomy and self-concept are encouraged and expected. Marchant et al, (2001) had similar ideas and suggested that a supportive parent-child relationship enabled children to internalise educational values which in turn are adopted by the children themselves and that it is these values that influence motivation, attitudes towards education and subsequent attainment.

The importance of experiences in the early years in relation to outcomes in later years has been studied longitudinally. Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) assert that their longitudinal study involving 122 children from the ages of 3-17 is the first study of its kind to investigate the transactional nature of parental involvement and child academic achievement. The focus of the study was children's ability in reading. They researched parental involvement under two categories: Academic instruction and academic socialisation. Instruction involves hands-on interactions in the home, whilst socialisation involves parents communicating academic values, expectations and beliefs to children. Results showed that both types of involvement correlated to reading achievement, but in interesting ways and at different ages. Academic instruction during early childhood predicted emergent reading skills. These skills in turn predicted positive outcomes for reading in middle childhood which was then linked to a decrease in academic instruction in adolescence. However, academic socialisation in early childhood was linked to achievement in early reading skills. High skills at a young age predicted academic socialisation parental involvement (i.e. parents were very likely to communicate educational values) which was then reciprocated by children who produced high reading outcomes at adolescence. Incidentally, the benefits of academic socialisation can be identified from early childhood through adolescence but the instruction style of involvement benefits reading for early childhood but not for middle childhood or adolescence (and this is also reflective of the findings of the cross-national analysis conducted by Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman, 2013). Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) suggest that parental involvement in its active form (instruction) has its optimum time for delivery set within a child's early years and that expectations and values for education (academic socialisation) in early childhood continue to have benefits for the child throughout schooling and into adolescence, which is important to note in relation to college-aged students.

Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) also described an 'academic trajectory' which is created by parents within the home context prior to any formal schooling and found that academic

instruction in later years has little effect on outcomes. Clearly early interactions are vital to building a foundation on which learning can be developed in later years. It was also noted in the study that the consistent involvement of parents leads to stability in the home context, producing an optimum environment for children's achievement in reading. They also assert the importance of the 'dynamic interplay' which is created between parents and children (Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried, 2013, p148). This can be related to the work of Gershoff et al, (2009) where parents support a child's development in the early years which increases student ability. As the child is perceived to become more able, parents then decrease their support in response. This has links with Vygotsky's scaffolding principle (Vygotsky, 1978). However, this finding could be disputed by those involved with parental involvement programmes for families of low socio-economic status where additional home help has been found to increase grades for older pupils (Henderson, 1987; Allen, 2011 and DfE, 2012).

A study by Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) looked at parental involvement and achievement for adolescent students. Over a thousand students and parents participated. They looked at three different types of involvement (school-based, home-based and academic socialisation) and looked for differences between students of different SES (Socio-economic status – middle and working). They note that there are few empirical studies that view parental involvement as a multi-faceted construct and look at the effect of different types of involvement on achievement during adolescence. They gave a questionnaire to both students and parents about their perceptions. Grade point averages were ascertained by looking at school report cards and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was the analytical tool used to produce results. Results showed that involvement and outcomes did not differ significantly for different ethnic groups, but low SES families were observed to be less involved in all three styles of parental involvement than parents in high SES families. Although parental involvement as a whole appeared to correlate positively with academic performance, academic socialisation had the strongest correlation with outcomes within this age group. A limitation of this study was that its main focus was the frequency of parental

interactions, rather than the quality of those interactions. The authors conclude that more research is needed in this area (Wang and Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

Lloyd-Smith and Baron's (2010) research realised a positive association between school performance and parental involvement at middle and high school levels. However, frequency of involvement was found to decline as the age of students increased. Lloyd-Smith and Baron (2010) also discussed the difficulties associated with the involvement of parents at higher academic levels which included parents feeling unable to help with specific subjects due to lack of knowledge, resulting in decreased parental confidence and subsequently reduced support. This idea was agreed by Coleman (2009) who claimed that parental withdrawal in later school years may be attributed to a higher-level school curriculum which some parents are likely to find daunting and therefore choose to become less involved (see Shulman, 1986; Shulman and Gudmundsdottir, 1987). Indeed, many parents may leave children disadvantaged in the first instance due to a limited understanding of literacy and numeracy (Bynner and Parsons, 2006). The decline in involvement proceeds steadily with age of child and is not found to be dependent on other factors like family background or socio-economic status. Moreover heavy (active, hands-on) parental involvement in older students may be replaced with peer networks which increase effectiveness, as argued by Bagby and Sulak (2014).

Interestingly, Hill and Taylor (2004) believe that the apparent 'decline' in parental involvement can be wrongly interpreted as a 'change' in parental involvement. Older children have parents who are less likely to be directly involved with the school but are more likely to involve themselves in other ways such as supporting with work at home. Houtenville and Conway (2008) studied parental involvement effects and questioned parents about this interaction. They discovered that parental involvement changed in response to increased school resources.

2.4 Parenting styles research

Research aim four sought to investigate whether any styles of parenting or (in the case of the current project) models of student experience could be realised through interrogation of both quantitative and qualitative data and if so, whether an association with attainment is evident. In the following section, a multitude of different ideas regarding the grouping of parental behaviours is presented. In the final part of this section, the associations identified between parenting styles and attainment are reviewed, as is a requirement of research aim four.

This section reviews literature surrounding the development of the idea of 'parenting styles' and includes literature that includes a range of ages since there is a lack of literature which specifically looks at parenting styles for post-sixteen. This refers to how certain behaviours tend to group together as observed in society when parents are involved with their children's education. This section does not seek to 'map' these parenting styles onto different levels of attainment. However, it investigates the relationships between different parental behaviours. Much of the research in relation to parenting styles has sought to identify patterns, relationships or trends between styles, attitudes and outcomes using a quantitative method which can appear to be rather detached and may not be representative of the deeper thoughts and processes that are at work in relationships between adults and their children. Similarly, a positivist approach serves to inform the current study in the methodology and analysis stages, although, as will be seen in Chapter Three, the project is not limited to solely investigating parental involvement from a purely positivist perspective as it adopts a post-positivist stance.

A review of the parenting style literature indicates that the ways of investigating styles of parenting have adapted over time. Findings suggest that parenting styles do not just encompass behaviours that exist in isolation. Social economic status (SES), parental education and occupation, income and activities (i.e. language used to converse with children, extra-curricular activities and even encouraging certain peer-peer friendships) have

been linked to parenting styles as will be discussed below. As can be noted from the review below, different scholars have approached the exploration of parenting styles from different angles and disciplines (although most, if not all are related to sociological perspectives). Paulson and Sputa (1996) completed research in America into patterns of parenting between the ages of 14-18 by exploring the perceptions of adolescents. They found that adolescents perceived:

a) mothers to be involved more than fathers
b) that the levels of 'active' involvement dropped during adolescence
c) Although active involvement was less common, values towards attainment did not change.

However, Paulson and Sputa (1996) only concentrated on the perceptions of parenting and did not seek to make any connections with attainment, as the current study intends.

Schaefer (1959) categorised parenting styles in three ways: acceptance vs rejection (i.e. does the parent love and accept the child or do they exhibit behaviours where the child feels rejected?), psychological autonomy vs psychological control (i.e. is students' autonomy promoted or do parents try to rigidly control their children?) and firm behaviour control vs lax behavioural control (i.e. are parents strict with rule setting and expectations for behaviour or do they give children more freedom to behave in a way the children choose?) However, this work was somewhat rejected by Skinner, Johnson and Snyder (2005) who studied dimensions of parenting. 'Dimensions' refers to 'the features, the qualities, the descriptive scheme used to capture the nature of parenting' (Skinner, Johnson and Snyder, 2005, p. 184). They discovered that bi-polar dimensions for parenting (bipolar refers to one dimension versus another. i.e. warmth versus rejection) were not found to be a reliable measure and favoured the idea that parenting consists of multiple dimensions (which they called uni-polar). In their study they looked at middle school and high school students up to the age of eighteen and found that six dimensions (see above) were apparent (warmth, rejection, structure, chaos, autonomy and coercion). These students were educated in a USA school

environment and so these findings cannot be generalised to college aged students in the UK. However, considering the distinction between bipolar and unipolar dimensions may be useful when considering suitable analysis procedures in the current study (i.e. not considering each behaviour on a scale but as a spectrum of behaviours which can all make up a parenting dimension. This can be achieved using Factor Analysis in SPSS which is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three).

Skinner, Johnston and Snyder (2005) identified three parenting themes that have developed in this field over the past 60 years: 1) Parental warmth and care, 2) Parents set a clear structure for discipline (including rule setting) and have consistent expectations and 3) Parents have support for children's autonomy (parents should not compromise the children's intrinsic motivation or freedom of expression). Although they report that styles of parenting have been studied from the early years to late adolescence and that both children and their parents have been questioned about parenting dimensions, they do not report any studies that relate directly to student attainment within a college environment.

Most notably, Darling and Steinberg (1993) argue that parenting styles should not be viewed as the sum of particular parenting practices but are created in response to the emotional climate of the relationship that presents itself between parent and child. In other words, parenting styles do not exist in isolation and both affect and are affected by current relationship perceptions of parent and child. Similarly, research by Morris, Cui and Steinberg (2013) has indicated that the emotional climate of the relationship between parent and child and the way in which emotional development of children is related to parental responsiveness to children's emotions is a leading factor in determining parenting styles.

Interestingly Pomerantz and Eaton (2001) found that children's academic outcomes were seen to predict parental involvement in the home up to 6 months later, suggesting that students themselves have the ability to change parental behaviours, just as parents may attempt to shape student behaviours. This suggests that a parenting style is not necessarily preconceived and inflexible but can be moulded and altered based on factors such as

relationships, personality of both parent and child and the emotional development of the child at any one time. The idea that child perceptions play a role in identifying the emotional climate of the relationship between parent and student is important to note in relation to the current project, as student perceptions of PIB are the focus. Students both influence and are influenced by these parental connections and their perceptions are of crucial importance in understanding the social, personal and emotional factors involved in this complex relationship.

When reviewing parenting styles literature, Ramaekers and Suissa (2012) comment that parents are often encouraged to find the parenting style that is 'right' for them, but much literature is limited to and based upon the styles identified by Baumrind (1966) whose work is predominantly psychological.

Baumrind's (1967) work, although dated, explored home-based parenting styles and has dominated much of the existing parenting styles literature and as such, is explored in detail below. She observed exchanges between parents and children in the home and identified three main styles: Authoritative, Authoritarian and Permissive. Authoritarian, Authoritative and Permissive parenting styles are seen to be comprised of certain attitudes, characteristics and practices segregated into two main categories: demandingness and responsiveness (Baumrind, 2013). Demandingness is comprised of three types of control: Psychological (characterised as manipulative, disrespectful and has been found to negatively influence the child's sense of self), Confrontive (firm with behavioural control and goal-orientated reasoning strategies) and Coercive (characterised by a negative assertion of power that is harsh and intrusive) (Baumrind, 2013). Responsiveness, however, relates to parental practices that show acceptance, warmth, support and the ability to be in tune to the needs of the child (Baumrind, 2013). These behaviours have been mapped on to particular styles of parenting as indicated below.

Authoritarian styles are more likely to use psychological control and rejecting, domineering, forceful and demanding behaviours (Baumrind, 2013) characterised by strict rules, rigidity

and punishments for children who do not conform to the high demands placed upon them and commonly has an element of intrusiveness (Yeh, 2003). Authoritative styles have been described by Maccoby and Martin (1983) as having clear roles, reasoning and being supportive of independence. Further, Baumrind (2013) recognises that this style also has high levels of behavioural control and is high on acceptance but is low on psychological control. This style is likely to promote autonomous learning within the child and this may relate to the adult's role in encouraging independence (Baumrind, 2013). Additionally, it emphasises forgiveness instead of punishment and establishes clear guidelines with high expectations, but parents are responsive and democratic where necessary. Feinstein, Duckworth and Sabates (2004) assert that Authoritative parenting is warm but firm. This style also involves sensitivity to children's needs, as reported by Bagby and Sulak (2015).

The third style, called Permissive, reflects the kind of relationship that could be called 'friendship'. Parents see their role as relaxed or lenient and this style favours psychological autonomy. Parents in this category are usually non-confrontational and often encourage the child to propose their own rules and follow through with decisions made by the child. It is important to note that this style has been related to lower achievement for younger children, despite offering psychological autonomy (i.e. children are encouraged to think for themselves) (Baumrind, 1971). Maccoby and Martin (1983) introduced an additional category to those identified by Baumrind (1971) – the 'uninvolved' parent, which, although signals lack of involvement, was noted as being the fourth style. Although parents in this category try to cater for a child's basic needs, they do little to interact or communicate effectively with their children and often ignore them (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Additionally, the uninvolved style is characterised by lax behavioural control and feelings of rejection and may even be neglectful.

Although Baumrind (1966, 1967) did not focus on child/student perceptions in her development of parenting styles ideas (as is the case with the current study) it was important to explore whether the traits identified in her styles (behavioural control, psychological

control, rejection, acceptance, psychological autonomy) were identified by students when they discuss their perceptions of their PIB.

Baumrind (1991) identifies that parenting styles must be identified as a 'typology' rather than a collection of items and behaviours on a linear scale and that each parenting style reflects more than the sum of its parts (i.e. it is complex in nature and is difficult to quantify). All these ideas, however, are communicated and reported as being important specifically for young children but there is little to suggest that these parenting practices are reflective of interactions with children aged between sixteen and eighteen. Questions must be asked here about early childhood parenting practices and the likelihood of these practises being modified in response to a maturing child with changing needs. The current project asked students to reflect on the PIB that they could remember from their younger years and how they felt these behaviours had changed over time.

In addition to her work on the three main parenting styles as mentioned above, Baumrind (1966) was also involved in secondary research where she made eight conclusions about parental disciplinary techniques and child behaviour from reviewing the literature of twelve studies. The most pertinent of these conclusions in relation to the current study is that "close supervision, high demands and other manifestations of parental authority provoke rebelliousness in children, particularly at adolescence" (Baumrind, 1966, p. 897). However, when reviewing this literature, although she uses the term 'adolescence', she does not specify that the children are post-16. In fact, she only refers to twelve-year-old children and third grade children (aged 8-9 years) in her review of studies. She also states that the projects that she explored to make her conclusions had similar methodological characteristics to each other. She explains that the data on children were collected through "direct repeated observations in natural or laboratory settings" (Baumrind, 1966, p. 892). However, for the conclusion referred to above, she included work by Pikas (1961), Middleton and Snell (1963) and Hoffman, Rosen and Lippitt (1960) who questioned children about their acceptance of parental authority but Baumrind does not acknowledge the crucial differences

in participant between these and the other studies she reviews, nor acknowledges that the use of child perceptions are likely to be fundamentally different to gaining parent data through interviews and observations. Demonstrating clarity over the use of perceptions as a data source is important to acknowledge, which has been explored in detail (see section 3.2.1 and Appendix F). Further, although it might be assumed that Baumrind's (1966) conclusions were made qualitatively from her review of studies, data from parents (in the form of scores) were collected from both interviews and observations which were based on quantitative analysis procedures. Baumrind discusses her results by saying the findings were significant at the .05 level, indicating statistical analysis procedures were employed. Here it is clear that both qualitative and quantitative measures have been employed (as in the current study) but were not fully acknowledged or justified.

Baumrind's (1966) final conclusion will also be useful to review in relation to the current study. She states that "similar patterns of child rearing affect boys and girls differently" (p.902). Here Baumrind (1966) indicated that when children have parental affection coupled with authority the development of responsibility is affected in girls and boys in different ways. Boys react well to warmth and discipline. However, too much of either variable for girls has negative effects. Baumrind (1966) does, however, imply that these findings must be viewed cautiously as she feels that it is difficult to identify which variables are at work for both parents and children. It is important to bear this in mind for the current study; both that girls and boys might be treated differently by parents, react differently to parents and report those perceptions differently, but also that it is hard to draw conclusions about gender and parental involvement as there are many variables to consider. However, work by other researchers in this area is clear that fundamental differences exist and can be investigated (Jeynes, 2007; Duckworth, 2008; Gutman and Akerman, 2008; Dubose et al, 2014). Despite these differing opinions on whether conclusions can be made in relation to gender differences, gender remains a key analytical variable in this study. However, the researcher notes that any findings in this area must be viewed tentatively after acknowledging the concerns raised by

Baumrind (1966). As identified above, Baumrind's work is helpful in terms of how she views different behaviours that are associated with different styles of parenting, as the current project also seeks to explore. Her use of language is also helpful in understanding the nature of interactions and feelings towards behaviours.

Chen and Ho (2012) investigated parent-child interaction and internalisation of 'parental values'. They explored the parent-child relationship and found two different styles: 'Reciprocal Filial Piety' and 'Authoritarian Filial Piety'. Filial Piety (A Chinese term) refers to respect of elders and a notion of obedience. This model was based on that of Yeh (2003) where 'reciprocal filial piety' refers to a relationship where children respect and care for their parents because they are thankful for their input in their lives. Authoritarian Filial Piety, however, is characterised by rigid parental requirements, parental seniority, a strong sense of 'compliance' where children feel obliged and pressurised to supress their self-autonomy. Chen and Ho (2012) found that the Authoritarian approach failed to encourage students to internalise their parents' values and created negative pressures. However, the Reciprocal Filial Piety is shown in parents who have confidence in their children's abilities, and this leads to increased motivation. In effect, the parents trust the children to succeed. This links strongly to the notion of high expectations and the way in which they are communicated to children. Interestingly, Deci and Ryan (1985) deem that intrinsic motivation (i.e. an internal drive to succeed in education) is reduced by parents increasing external control over their children.

The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) developed by Robinson et al, (1995) has been used and adapted by many researchers wishing to investigate parenting practices (Fu et al, 2013). The questionnaire asks parents to report on their perceptions of their behaviours and has been used to categorise styles of parenting into Authoritarian, Authoritative and Permissive styles (as described by Baumrind, 1966, 1967). A study by Fu et al, (2013) which sought to test the reliability of the PSDQ concluded that it was a useful (and valid) tool to evaluate parenting styles when asking parents of children aged 6-16

years. However, work in the USA by Blakely-Kimble (2009) criticised the PSDQ for failing to measure the 'uninvolved' parenting style. He also suggested that it was limited in the way it used continuous variable-centred scores (parenting traits were measured on a scale) as opposed to categorising styles in a typology (identifying parental behaviours that may group together).

Goodall and Montgomery (2013) identified a confusion of what 'parental engagement' means. They suggested that engagement exists where parents show a great commitment and a greater ownership than parents who are merely 'involved' (i.e. they ask questions and show some interest but do not show the same kind of commitment and ownership as 'engaged' parents). They argue that not all parents share the same conceptualisation of what the terms parental engagement or parental involvement encompass. These findings suggest that when questioning students on their parental involvement it is important to be clear and transparent about the kinds of behaviours that might constitute 'parental involvement' and hence a structure such as PIB used in the current study is helpful to give students a platform or starting point from which to explain, explore and describe their perceptions. Additionally, reported behaviours may suggest that a student's parents are 'engaged' (i.e. fully committed and demonstrate clear ownership) as described above. However, although important to consider during the analysis process, it was unnecessary to describe this distinct difference to students during data collection.

This section synthesised work by many in this area and seeks to investigate and critique these contributions in light of the current study. Use of language to describe actions, intentions and attitudes is important here in relation to how individuals perceive different PIB and will be considered carefully in the analysis stages both in terms of how data is organised but also how exploration of these ideas may have contributed to researcher knowledge and therefore development of structures used in the project (i.e. PIB statement formation).

Carolan (2015) investigated specific parenting styles, concerted cultivation, peer school-related attitudes, socioeconomic status (SES) and academic achievement for high school

ninth grade (ages 14-15) students in the USA. Students and parents were surveyed, and the study involved 10,350 students. Carolan (2015, p.3) discusses the term “intergenerational transmission of educational advantage” which refers to aspects of concerted cultivation which are seen as a mechanism in which social background and expectations, attitudes and behaviours are transferred to children. Like Lareau (2011) Carolan (2015) suggests that the idea of concerted cultivation is a result of different social classes practising different parenting styles and parental expectation was positively related to concerted cultivation. SES also had a positive link with concerted cultivation and parental expectations which in turn are linked to higher academic outcomes. Concerted cultivation was also linked to school friends’ school-related attitudes which were also related to higher achievement. The limitations of this study included the fact that social class was only measured using three factors: parents’ highest level of education, parents’ occupations and total family income. Additionally, this research did not include participants up to the age of 18. Work by Savage et al, (2013) and Bourdieu (1977) indicates that social class is more complicated than these three factors proposed above and involves many more dimensions including the idea of social, economic and cultural capital, which was not explored by Carolan (2015). Additionally, Carolan (2015) used maths scores as the sole outcomes in which to talk about academic achievement of young people in the study which is not likely to be a fair representation of attainment across other subjects. Different subjects are likely to benefit from different skills sets and so maths scores cannot be generalised to represent broad attainment across subjects. The average age of participants in the study was fourteen, which differs from the focus age for the current study. This research was conducted in the USA and therefore cannot be generalised to UK schools and colleges.

2.5 Conclusion

The researcher notes concern surrounding the different terms used to describe parental behaviours (i.e. parenting style, parenting dimensions, parental involvement). These terms probably encompass the same ideas, but it is unhelpful to use them interchangeably. It

would be clearer to define the types of things parents do and the ways in which students see parents interacting with them as PIB because this suggests that not all parents can be categorised as using one strategy but that parents will exhibit a number of separate behaviours that may (or may not) link with each other to create 'groups' of practice.

The review contained theories which have both sociological and psychological foundations. It was important to review literature which covers both sociological and psychological perspectives since both these main perspectives were used to fulfil the research questions (see section 3.1.1) as this reflects the post-positivist nature of the current project where mixed methods were used to gain as much information as possible about parental involvement (see section 3.2.3 and section 3.2.5, respectively). This ensured that literature and findings were as rich as possible because the project sought to understand parental involvement holistically.

As highlighted by Erikson's (1995) idea of diffusion, the researcher must be careful not to assume that all learners seek to gain the highest grades possible during their time at college. Their perceptions may question whether attainment is important. If attainment is not important then studying the factors which may or may not affect it may also be perceived by students to be unnecessary and may in turn affect student choices when involvement in parental involvement research is offered. Students may adopt parental value systems due to convenience and so perceptions as identified by the researcher may not offer clear reasons for views or may appear to communicate adverse, confused or indifferent opinions.

The literature review highlighted a number of factors that were seen as influential in determining aspects of parental behaviours and subsequent attainment: Age, gender, ethnicity/cultural differences and social class. For the purposes of this study in an FE college, the researcher is also interested in the affect that course chosen by student can make to parental involvement and subsequent attainment, since FE level three BTEC courses have not been identified in existing studies.

Additionally, the literature search has failed to find a common framework used to explore parental involvement styles and processes. Scholars have covered a large range of parenting styles and involvement types including the communication of positive educational values (Marchant, et al, 2001); concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2003); homework surveillance (Bagby and Sulak, 2015); support for autonomy (Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack, 2007; Knollmann and Wild, 2007; Katz, Kapian and Buzukashvily, 2011; Bagby and Sulak, 2015; Hill and Wang, 2015), intrusive parenting (Trautwein et al, 2006); parental rule setting (Patall et al, 2008); authoritative style characterised by a warm and firm approach coupled with high expectations (Huang and Gove, 2015); educational advice (Ceballo et al, 2014) and discussion of learning strategies (Hill and Tyson, 2009).

However, there are three studies which are worthy of note due to the concise explanation of the parental involvement aspects they identify, although they are not without their criticisms as is explained below. Chen and Ho (2012) defined involvement in two ways: Reciprocal Filial Piety (two-way respect between child and parent) and Authoritarian Filial Piety (a rigid and pressurised approach). Although these styles are concisely described, it must be acknowledged that their study is very culture-specific (i.e. based on Chinese involvement practices only) and does not account for those parents who play no part at all in the education of their children.

Dumont et al, (2014) categorised three types of involvement: parent control (characterised by pressure, intrusiveness, coercion and dominance), parental responsiveness (support for child's autonomy and interpersonal involvement) and parental structure (organisation of environment, setting a framework that supports a notion of competence). Although this framework appears to be quite detailed, as with Chen and Ho's framework above, it fails to acknowledge that some students (particularly of 16+ age) may have no parental involvement at all and may indeed live away from their parents or have no contact altogether. It also fails to include aspects relating to high expectations, which are important to consider with work in this area.

Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) created a distinction between academic instruction (where parents take time to interact with their children one-to-one with the focus on development of specific skills and academic socialisation (involving parents communicating their academic values, high expectations and beliefs). This framework does involve social constructs such as the development of values and high expectations, but fails to identify any difference in a rigid, directive parenting approach and styles which may be more passive and encourage autonomy.

Taylor, Clayton and Rowley (2004) discussed behavioural features of parental involvement (i.e. what parents do) which is a core feature of the current project because it collects student perceptions of individual parental behaviours using the PIB statements (which relates to RQ2) (see section 3.1.2.1) However, these statements go beyond using individual parent behaviours to gather a picture of parental involvement as they also encompass ideas about parental expectations, aspirations and values in education which are likely to be underpinned by the second perspective identified by Taylor, Clayton and Rowley (2004) which is "who parents are" (see section 2.1).

The framework of parental behaviours proposed below is based on ideas collected from the studies described above as well as previous work (Darnell, 2012) and explains types of involvement succinctly as it creates four distinct categories which are: 'DAPSS', 'PAPSS', 'NEAV' and 'PEAV'. DAPSS stands for Directive, Authoritarian Parent Support Style. It is characterised by a relationship in which the parent strives to remain in control of their child's actions, 'managing' the learning process and has a somewhat 'pedantic' approach to helping; directing their child to work in a way in which the student feels pressurised. In effect it appears like a top-down model and could be described as the 'didactic model'. PAPSS, in comparison, stands for Passive, Affable Parent Support Style. PAPSS, in contrast to DAPSS is characterised by gentle encouragement and mild guidance. It emphasises verbal exchanges instead of kinaesthetic (hands on) approaches and its placid model allows the student to perceive that the parent-child relationship is on the same level in terms of

academic power in contrast to the top down model of the DAPSS. It includes elements of respect and trust where high expectations encourage the student's autonomy and is flexible to student need. In effect this appears to be the dialogic model. NEAV stands for 'negative expectations, aspirations and values' and reflects parents who fail to encourage or value education for their children. PEAV, is the opposite of NEAV and is reflective of parents who communicate positive expectations, aspirations and values to children through discussion of careers or general attainment.

The literature which reviewed existing studies into parental involvement can be summarised as follows:

1) Most of the literature in relation to PIB is limited to school-aged children and studies in this area of interest have rarely been published which focus specifically on the 16+ age range.

2) The quality of parental-child interactions within the home have more bearing on improvement in student outcomes than quantity of parental-child interactions.

3) Positive involvement in the early years appears to not only be important for learning at this stage alone but can create a foundation for the child to build on in future years where learning can become autonomous.

4) Course studied by the student and differences between genders in FE colleges and links to attainment appear to have had minimal attention in terms of prior enquiries.

5) Studies have used different terms interchangeably meaning there is no agreed definition of PIB.

6) The problem of causation has been noted and instead of loosely acknowledging this idea or ignoring it altogether (as other projects have done), the current project questioned students about it during the initial discussions in order to challenge it directly and become clear about its potential consequence in relation to the study's research findings (see Chapter Three).

7) No generalised framework for categorising different kinds of parental involvement has been realised. Many structures support the same ideas but no studies to date pull together all the ideas discussed in the literature review in a concise, clear manner, whilst accounting for students who may have no support at all.

The literature review has included aspects such as sociological and psychological influences for students and their views of parental involvement which relates to all four research aims. It has also reviewed existing work on attainment and perceptions, including the effect of factors such as ethnicity, gender and cultural capital (research aims one, two and three). Additionally, it has explored literature surrounding 'parenting styles' which links specifically to research aim four.

Based on a review of the existing studies into parental involvement, there are many lessons to be learnt with regard to the ways in which research into parental involvement should be appropriately conducted. Therefore, with this in mind, the current project has been clear to:

a) Recognise the problems associated with the idea of 'causation'/reactive hypothesis and to understand and report any links between data as 'associations', rather than attributing causes and subsequent effects
b) State the awareness that as the project gathers perceptions, these are a reflection (rather than a reproduction) of reality so offers a clear explanation and justification for paradigm choices, ontological positions and researcher approaches which are in contrast to most existing studies in this area
c) Use average course scores (i.e. UCAS points) so that the score is a reflection of overall performance, not just attainment in one subject area
d) Use mixed methods to identify triangulation between sets of data.

Chapter Three: Methodology and methods

3.1 Introduction

The project sought to gather student perceptions of Parental Involvement Behaviour (PIB) for individuals aged 16+. The research was completed in one college of Further Education and, as such, is reflective of a case study approach. It used mixed methods to gather student responses and reflects research choices which align with a post-positivist paradigm. This chapter is effectively split into two halves: methods and methodology. It begins with an introduction which states the research questions but also displays the overall project design for the purposes of clarity (see Table 3.1). The methods section (3.3) includes explanation and justifications for the collection and analysis of data and specifically presents the PIB statements. Ethical considerations are highlighted in section 3.3.2. The methodology section (3.2) offers an overview of the paradigm of post-positivism, ontology and epistemology as well as a critical engagement regarding the use of mixed methods, the case study approach and insider research. The summary (3.4) reminds the reader of the main points from the methodology to take forward in understanding and interpreting the findings section (Chapter Four).

3.1.1 Research questions (RQs)

There are four main research questions as can be seen below. The research questions reflect the research aims (see Introduction).

Research Question ONE

Which aspects of PIB are reported to be important and/or problematic for students in relation to their attainment at college and are these views different from college guidance, Ofsted requirements and policy-maker perception?

Research Question TWO:

Does student attainment associate with either: a) student perceptions of PIB or b) student age, gender, ethnicity, cultural capital influences or course?

Research Question THREE:

Is there a statistically significant difference in student responses to questions about PIB according to student age, ethnic group, gender or course?

Research Question FOUR: Can distinct models of student experiences be determined through exploration of both quantitative and qualitative data and, if they can:

a) are these models of student experiences reflective of the hypothesised categories of DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV?

b) is there any association with student attainment?

Table 3.1 presented in section 3.1.2 shows the overall design for the project including how each research question relates to the topic focus, the data collection method and type of data, the analysis process and the relevant tables and figures produced from the analysis.

3.1.2 Overall project design and navigation

Table 3.1: Overall Project Design and Navigation

Research questions	Topic focus	Collection method and data type	Data analysis methods	Relevant tables/ figures
(1) Which aspects of PIB are reported to be important and/or problematic for students in relation to their attainment at college and do these views differ from college guidance, Ofsted requirements and policy-maker perception?	Identifying themes as voiced by students which are important or problematic in relation to their attainment and PIB. The views of the Director of Quality and Standards (DQS) (policy maker), college guidance and Ofsted in relation to PIB and whether there is a discrepancy between these and students' views	Qualitative findings gathered through student focus groups, interviews, questionnaires and an interview with the DQS at the case study college. Themes are compared and contrasted to information in the college prospectus, Ofsted and Policy-maker perception (see Chapters one and two)	Thematic analysis was employed which initially included transcription using a computer and a recording device. Key quotes were identified in the DQS interview. For student data thematic analysis was conducted using the computer programme NVIVO and led to the creation of mind-maps, lists and two hierarchies.	Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 The hierarchies of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
(2) Does student attainment associate with either: **a) student perceptions of PIB** **b) student age, gender, ethnicity, cultural capital influences or course?**	Responses to questions about PIB including extent of agreement to PIB statements UCAS outcomes	Quantitative. Perceptions of PIB were gathered through responses to Likert scale items based on PIB statements and additional questions in the questionnaires. Information relating to student factors (e.g. age, gender) was collected at the beginning of	Percentage distributions in relation to extent of agreement to PIB statements was explored. PIB statements were also explored in relation to attainment using the Kruskal-Wallis test (two or more factors). Attainment was explored in relation to the factors of age, gender, ethnicity, course and parental qualifications and income. This mainly used the Kruskall-Wallis	Tables 4.4, 4.5, 4.5a and 4.5b

Table 3.1: Overall Project Design and Navigation

Research questions	Topic focus	Collection method and data type	Data analysis methods	Relevant tables/ figures
		the questionnaires. UCAS points were collected separately from the college database.	and the Mann-Whitney Test was used for two factors only (i.e. male or female was limited to two factors).	
	Students who attained high, medium and low grades were identified and interviewed to explore if there was any difference in the way they described their PIB.	Qualitative information collected by conducting interviews with students	The thematic analysis for this was split into those students who strongly agreed or strongly disagreed that more PIB would assist them in gaining higher grades in order to identify associations between student perceptions of PIB and attainment	Table 4.9
(3) Is there a statistically significant difference in student responses to questions about PIB according to student age, ethnic group, gender or course?	Whether age, ethnic group, gender or course have any bearing on how students answer questions relating to their PIB.	Questionnaire quantitative data from Likert scale responses.	Pearson Chi-squared test within the compare column proportions tool using SPSS	

Table 3.1: Overall Project Design and Navigation

Research questions	Topic focus	Collection method and data type	Data analysis methods	Relevant tables/ figures
(4) Can distinct models of student experiences be determined through exploration of both quantitative and qualitative data and, if they can: **a) are these models of student experiences reflective of the hypothesised categories of DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV?** **b) is there any association with student attainment?**	Relates to whether student experiences can be grouped in any way to form styles of parenting or models of experience and whether the initial DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV categories can be replaced by a different model by looking at both quantitative and qualitative data. It also looks at whether particular styles or models are seen to associate with student outcomes.	Quantitative data gathered from all PIB statements Likert scale responses in the questionnaire	Data was used to investigate whether another model was evident via performing Categorical Factor Analysis (CFA)	Table 4.12
		Quantitative data gathered in the focus groups through the statement choosing exercise	Data was used to explore associations between statements in regard to original groupings of DAPSS, etc and look at the percentages in relation to choices of each statement. Analysis of percentages and visual grid using an excel spreadsheet	Table 4.10

Table 3.1: Overall Project Design and Navigation

Research questions	Topic focus	Collection method and data type	Data analysis methods	Relevant tables/ figures
		Quantitative data gathered using Likert scales in the questionnaire was used to investigate whether the original groups of DAPSS, PAPSS, PEAV and NEAV were seen to have internal consistency	Cronbach Alpha Test	Table 4.11
		Quantitative data gathered using Likert scales in the questionnaire was used to investigate whether the model produced by the CFA associated with UCAS points.	Multi-nominal Logistic Regression	Table 4.13

Table 3.1: Overall Project Design and Navigation

Research questions	Topic focus	Collection method and data type	Data analysis methods	Relevant tables/ figures
		Qualitative responses were gathered from the focus groups, questionnaires and interviews.	The 'Compare and Relate' technique (Bazeley, 2016) was employed through detailed thematic analysis to link, support and extend findings across three research tools to create a holistic model of experiences and attainment.	RD: Figure 4.4 EoM: Figure 4.5 IASO: Figure 4.6 LoID: Figure 4.7

3.1.2.1 Parental Involvement Behaviour(s) (PIB) statements

In order to understand the methodology section, the PIB statements are introduced here. A series of statements that related to PIB were central to the project and were used in three different ways to:

- Explore which behaviours were commonly associated with other behaviours in the *focus group* activity
- Allow qualitative opportunities in the *focus groups* for students to explain their feelings towards PIB
- Gather quantitative data in the *questionnaires* which could be explored in relation to attainment and whether different behaviours were found to group together to form parenting models/styles

For the quantitative data specifically, the statements were used to ask students to reflect on their PIB using agreement with a Likert scale. Justification for the use of a Likert scale is covered in section 3.3.1.4. The statements were also used as a basis for discussion during the focus groups and were adapted where necessary in response to the pilot findings. The final set of statements can be viewed in Table 3.2 on the following page.

Table 3.2: PIB statements

Code	DAPSS	Code	PAPSS
4a	"My parents/carers like to be in control of the amount and/or quality of college work that I do"	5a	"My parents/carers gently encourage me to complete my work for college"
4b	"I rely on my parents/carers to manage and help me with coursework"	5b	"If I am struggling, my parents/carers will try to guide me in my college work"
4c	"My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have not asked them to"	5c	"My parents/carers are willing to talk to me about my college work, rather than getting involved with the essay writing"
4d	"My parents/carers believe that they know more than me about how I should be doing my college work"	5d	"My parents/carers believe that I know as much as them about how to get on with my work"
4e	"I sometimes feel pressurised by my parents/carers to do college work when I do not really want to"	5e	"I choose when and how to do my college work"
4f	"My parents/carers do not really trust me to get on with my work myself"	5f	"My parents/carers trust me to do college work myself"
4g	"My parents/carers make choices about my work"	5g	"My parents/carers respect my choices when it comes to college work"
Code	NEAV	Code	PEAV
7a	"My parents/carers are not sure how well I will do at college"	8a	"My parents/carers expect me to do well at college"
7b	"My parents/carers are unsure whether I will succeed in education"	8b	"My parents/carers have always known that I would succeed in education"
7c	"My parents/carers do not have particular aspirations for what job I get"	8c	"My parents/carers have inspired me to work hard so I can get the job that I want"
7d	"My parents/carers do not think education is particularly important"	8d	"My parents/carers think it is important to get a good education"
7e	"I do not place great importance on my education"	8e	"I value a good education"

The creation of these PIB statements was influenced by:

a) The researcher's perception (gathered through life experiences)

b) Data collected from a previous study (Darnell, 2014)

c) The researcher's experience in working in FE specifically

d) The researcher's reading of literature surrounding this topic

e) Feedback from students during the pilot focus groups.

The PIB statements are presented in four main categories which include both overt behaviours (i.e. my parents/carers make choices about my work) and behaviours which may be more abstract and communicated in a number of ways (i.e. my parents/carers expect me to do well). These four categories are set out below:

1) Directive Authoritarian Parenting Support Style (**DAPSS**) – these seven statements make reference to high surveillance, control, management, pressure and lack of respect for student autonomy.
2) Passive Affable Parenting Support Style (**PAPSS**) – these seven statements can be seen to largely oppose those statements for DAPSS and refer to gentle encouragement, guidance, communication, student choices, trust and respect for student autonomy.
3) Negative Expectations, Aspirations and Values for education (**NEAV**) – these five statements make reference to low trust, doubtfulness of success, unclear motivation and a feeling that education is unimportant.
4) Positive Expectations, Aspirations and Values for education (**PEAV**) – these five statements can be seen to oppose those statements for NEAV and relate to high trust, positive inspirations for career choices and high values for study at college.

Although these groupings for the PIB statements were seen as a starting point, as the thesis developed, it recognised that student perceptions challenged the simplistic nature of these categories which resulted in a re-model of ideas surrounding PIB as can be seen in Chapter Four.

3.2 Methodology

The paradigm in which the research is positioned does not reflect either of the traditional paradigms (positivism or interpretivism). This is due in part to the use of mixed methods (focus groups, questionnaires and interviews) but also due to the purpose of the project in relation to the research questions, which sought to gather information both quantitatively and qualitatively. Although some aspects of the project will appear as interpretivist in design and execution, they are underpinned by positivist notions, aligning the project firmly in the post-positivist paradigm. The choice of using mixed methods is justified in identification of the strengths of using both quantitative and qualitative data to answer a set of related research questions and serves to explore the topic of students' reported experiences of parental involvement at multiple opportunities, meaning that data could be triangulated. As Morgan (2014) comments, the use of mixed methods may be seen as a route to identifying two sides of the same coin – i.e. a process which allows the fullest picture to be realised. The study is a case study as it focuses on one FE institution and this is critiqued in section 3.2.4. In addition to critiquing and explaining its stance in relation to ontological and epistemological aspects in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, respectively, the following section will detail how post-positivism presents itself in the current study but will also synthesise, critique and justify its use (see section 3.2.3). It will also offer a critical engagement on mixed methods in section 3.2.5 as well as a critical perspective of the 'insider researcher' in section 3.2.6.

3.2.1 Ontology

As the current project focusses on perceptions, it is important to explore the notion of social constructivism in relation to ontology. The ontological perspective which has been adopted for the current study is critical realism. The following section will justify how this decision was reached by discussing different ontological perspectives and concluding the choices made for the current project. Vaihinger (1911) (in Pritchard and Woollard, 2010) suggests from a scientific perspective that the human brain's purpose is not to use mental processes to reflect reality but to *make sense* of varied experiences, which are, unsurprisingly, subjective

in nature. In addition, Walliman (2016) discusses the concept ‘structuralism’ which seeks to explain social constructivism. He suggests that social constructivism is developed through deep structures in society that underpin social reality. This abstract phenomenon is clearly difficult to quantify or exemplify and at first glance does not appear to be tangible. However, it may be observed when we consider that each individual represents knowledge through language and the reason that individuals are likely to view the same things differently is due to the individual structures that determine what they see or perceive as their fact, their truth or their sense of reality. After exploring the challenges set within the unique nature of the construction of knowledge, Berger and Luckmann (1991) maintained that participant perceptions are unlikely to be completely imaginary and that, although they may be perceived in different ways, are likely to correspond to something real in the world, even if they do not reflect it exactly, being interwoven with subjective experiences. Here we see that this is not seen to be a limitation, rather a concept with which a researcher should acknowledge and as a lens through which to view findings. A deeper analysis of the ideas surrounding constructivism are available in Appendix F.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) discuss qualitative research within the positivist paradigm suggesting that associated realist positions can be naïve. Positivism, in their view asserts that reality must be captured, explored and understood and has links to objective science practices. However, Berger and Luckmann (1991) maintain that, although it seeks to identify with reality, realist ontology can only describe interpretations of an independent reality and can never fully demonstrate ‘truth’. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) identify that post-positivism is less naïve in its view of reality, suggesting that it can approximate understandings even if reality can never be fully understood. The ontology best suited to describing this paradigm is critical realism (Bhaskar, 2008; 2011 and Collier, 1994). Although not identifying ‘critical realism’ as a term used to describe the concept of ontology, Henderson (2011) asserts that a researcher must acknowledge subjective realities and identify that perceptions gathered are

socially constructed but advocates that they can still be used in research so long as this is recognised.

It must be mentioned that the concept of an individual's reality has a variable nature meaning that individuals' constructs can be created over a period of time so that when communicating their thoughts of PIB, students are likely to be summarising their current views and are likely to reflect aspects of reality not reproduce them accurately (critical realism). In this way, it was important that students were asked to consider their PIB as presented throughout their time at college, to summarise their current feelings (through the PIB statements which were analysed quantitatively) but also to have the opportunity to provide specific examples and stories to elaborate and communicate their understandings (through the focus groups and interviews). This is another justification for the use of a mixed methods design.

The idea of critical realism was developed over time. Bhaskar (1975) first called it *transcendental realism*, then later *critical naturalism* (Bhaskar, 1978) and later *dialectical critical realism* (Bhaskar, 1993). Nevertheless, for the purposes of the current study, the notion of critical realism will be used and understood as summarised below and based on Bhaskar's (2008, 2011) ideas:

- Understanding reality is complex and researchers must identify that fully positivist approaches (realism) and fully interpretivist approaches (relativism) are to be used cautiously.
- Reality has depth and therefore it is often difficult to portray the whole picture
- The world is structured, differentiated and changing and perceptions are also fluid
- Consideration must be had for the underlying structures that may generate discourses (i.e. causes)
- It is important to recognise that the world is a mix of spatial processes which are intrinsically dynamic in nature (i.e. they change in response to other factors)

- Things can exist apart from human knowledge and experience of them (i.e. humans are unlikely to be able to communicate a full understanding of every situation).

This suggests that although individuals construct knowledge in different ways and may not be able to understand and communicate the whole picture (or even experience the whole picture), the communication of their perceptions are likely to reflect real-life events in some way and even if they need to be viewed tentatively, can be approximated as relating to an experience. Critical realism sits between realism and relativism and is reflective of elements of the post-positivist paradigm which is adopted in this study (Bhaskar, 2008; 2011 and Collier, 1994) and its acknowledgment of the use of mixed methods to gather as much information as possible in different ways (Henderson, 2011; Denscombe, 2008 and Harpe, 2015).

It is important to note the concept of critical realism in relation to how students may view the PIB statements and make sense of them within the questionnaire, but also how students will understand the questions asked in the focus groups and interviews (see Appendices I and K, respectively). The intention is that asking students to reflect on parental involvement and then offering them a structure in which to frame their understandings should not change those understandings but should make it more likely that students can reflect more fully and find a position for their perceptions against the statements. Indeed, the focus groups asked students to explain their reasons for choosing PIB statements and to give examples where appropriate. Asking broadly about parental involvement without providing an initial structure may have the undesired effect of students not being able to pinpoint how they feel. As noted by Robinson and Harris (2014) students in their study demonstrated that they were unlikely to have ever considered their PIB before. Imposing a framework was not viewed as a challenge to students' communication of perceptions; more as a scaffold to explore their feelings and therefore reflect or correspond to real life events. It sought to support them in communicating their understanding/perceptions as accurately as possible in relation to their experiences.

Here there are a number of challenges for the researcher. To what extent is student perception a true reflection of reality inasmuch as being a representation of parental behaviours over an extended time period and how are these perceptions interpreted and framed by the researcher? Firstly, there is no way of knowing whether information provided by the student is a reflection of current or past interactions or is identified as a culmination of attitudes, thoughts and feelings over time, although steps were taken to direct students to think about their PIB over the past two years at college. Secondly, as has been identified, the way in which the researcher frames information is due to many personal factors and is deeply embedded and cannot be removed from the research. Although this may be seen as a challenge, it does not need to be seen as a limitation since all (particularly qualitative) data is likely to be perceived differently by different researchers.

Constructivism, therefore, is an individualised version of reality shaped by past and current experiences and upon prior knowledge and understanding (Pritchard and Woollard, 2010). The construct of PIB in itself is influenced by the researcher's knowledge, experiences and understandings. PIB are fluid and are likely to be responsive to the needs of the student. PIB can therefore be reported differently based on expectations, aspirations, values, prior experiences and current situations (family structure, finances, number of siblings, the time of year as well as current progress of student).

3.2.2 Epistemology

Although some techniques in gathering qualitative information may appear to have interpretivist tendencies, the stance taken by the researcher is to 'create the knowledge' which aligns with the paradigm of post-positivism (see section 3.2.3) and was the position adopted by the researcher when gathering information across all research tools (see Table 3.3). Even when establishing what appeared to be a democratic process with the students (i.e. asking for their comments in relation to research tools in the focus groups) the researcher had a clear structure in mind and worked to divert the students to describe their perceptions through imposed structures (i.e. the PIB statements, the questions chosen for

focus groups and interviews). These imposed structures are reflective of post-positivism and the idea that the researcher created the knowledge with the research participants as opposed to allowing co-construction of knowledge. The researcher did not seek to impose their own perspectives on the participants but sought to allow opportunities for participants to express their views using the tools and experiences the researcher provided. The post-positivist paradigm was reflected in the questionnaire structure (which was only open to adaptations during the piloting phase) as it was an imposed framework which included the PIB statements and the majority of questions (although relating to perceptions) were designed to be analysed quantitatively. In addition, the interviews were also underpinned by post-positivist notions:

1) The interviews were designed to build upon and support information gathered during the questionnaire completion and so this qualitative data was seen as secondary to the quantitative data

2) The interviews were carefully managed to include selected students who had answered in certain ways during the completion of the questionnaire (i.e. strongly agree or strongly disagree to question 14) and the questions asked in the interviews were developed to reflect the differing opinions in relation to parental involvement

3) After the interviews were completed, students were segregated into achievement categories to explore the differences between these groups and how they described their PIB, which again demonstrates a post-positivist dominant stance.

Quantitative (questionnaire) data was used to establish whether or not there are any relationships between factors (attainment, age, gender, PIB rated on a Likert scale and ethnicity) and would be seen to reflect the post-positivist approach in that a) presents itself as a deductive approach as it seeks to refine a theory (the initial DAPSS/PAPSS/NEAV/PEAV categories) and b) it includes identifying and measuring

relationships where they exist between attainment, age, gender, PIB and ethnicity whilst seeking rich qualitative information which may explain these associations.

The researcher was very aware of the need to be open to creating new PIB statements through analysing student responses to see if any behaviours were not accounted for within the existing framework and in this way, was flexible in the approach to PIB. It was seen as important to be open to what students were saying by stepping back and not viewing them through the lens of DAPSS and PAPSS and this did have an element of interpretation, which is reflective of post-positivism. These initial categories were merely used as a framework on which to build the individual PIB statements. In this way, the project had post-positivist tendencies as it sought to: a) elucidate meaning (how and why do certain PIB map onto other factors and what do the students say about this) and b) identify the relationships between what students say about their PIB and their perceptions towards these where applicable.

Additionally, it was not parents/carers themselves who were answering questions about their behaviours as this is not the main focus of the study. The current project focus was on students' perception of different levels and types of support since what is intended from the parent perspective and what is received from the student perspective may be different. In effect, the quantitative data seeks to understand the relationships/patterns (if any) between the factors (highlighted above), but qualitative responses seek to answer the questions of 'why?', 'how?' and 'to what extent?' It must be noted, then that constructivism maintains that each individual will create their own version of reality and communicate that understanding as it has been constructed and received by them (see section 3.2.1 and Appendix F). As the researcher took the role of the knowledge creator, it is useful to unpick the opportunities for responses to be checked for trustworthiness/reliability across different data collection opportunities. Three aspects are identified below:

1) The researcher attempted to gain as much information as possible in several different ways (mixed methods), without overwhelming the participants

2) The researcher used methods of triangulation (see three forms of triangulation in section 3.3.1.4) so that during the analysis stage, responses could be checked

3) The researcher sought clarification where appropriate – asking for examples and stories from student experiences to further gather perceptions

Additionally, the researcher was aware that any imposed framework and activity (i.e. choosing PIB statements that they most agreed with in the focus group activity) was likely to be a) perceived differently by different students and b) potentially limit students' ability to closely reflect their understandings of their reality as it limited the freedom of responses. Nevertheless, the activity of choosing PIB statements was followed by a group discussion which, although was semi-structured through focused topic questioning, allowed students the chance to express themselves more fully. Although the researcher could not be fully detached from the collection of qualitative data and there was an element of interpretation of students' voices for focus groups and interviews (as there is with any qualitative research), the framework within which students' comments were collected reflected a post-positivist approach where the researcher was seen to take control and to create knowledge through choosing different questions and attempted to be objective. The researcher attempted to not offer personal opinions or examples when asking questions. Despite this, students may have been influenced by the researcher in some way, but this was difficult to determine (see also section 3.2.6).

3.2.3 Post-positivism

The paradigm within which the project most comfortably sits is known as 'post-positivism', (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Groff, 2004; Henderson, 2011; Wildemuth, 1993). Post-positivism concurs with the current study due to its underlying positivist elements which are built on and are supported by practices which are seen to be interpretivist and has been

chosen because it successfully aligns with the research project aims and research questions.

The following section serves two purposes:

a) It synthesises the distinctions between three paradigms (positivism, post-positivism, and interpretivism) and their individual elements by reviewing literature critically

b) It situates, explains and justifies how the elements identified above serve and are fit for purpose in answering the research questions.

Post-positivism appears to be perceived by many to be a paradigm in its own right and not merely a mix of two existing paradigms. Henderson (2011) suggests that post-positivism represents a step away from complete interpretivist practices but provides a clearer way to acknowledge difficulties associated with traditional, wholly positivist approaches but acknowledges that mixing paradigms has often been seen as taboo. Indeed, Henderson (2011), after two decades of conducting, reading and guiding research projects, concluded that research is not likely to be fully positivist or interpretivist and that most are likely to reflect the post-positivist paradigm. Post-positivist practices are used as a means to best represent lived experiences (Henderson, 2011) and, as such, is seen to reflect the methodological choices for the current study which is concerned with gathering student perceptions. In many respects, post-positivism can be seen to sit between positivism and interpretivism. Positivism, post-positivism and interpretivism can be viewed on a continuum, where post-positivism, although in between the two traditional paradigms, appears to be shifted more closely to positivism and, although it has positivist underpinnings also includes some interpretivist practices (see Table 3.3 on the following page).

For the purposes of explaining how this project sits between the two traditional paradigms and therefore is rooted in post-positivism, the aspects of all three paradigms have been segregated into different ‘elements’. As an example, ‘ontology’ and ‘epistemology’ are different elements that are distinct in the way they are viewed within different paradigms as

can be seen in Table 3.3. This table has been constructed to communicate the distinctions between these elements and to clarify how the different elements are represented in the current project. Its production reflects ideas by Guba and Lincoln (1994); Collier, (1994); Denzin and Lincoln, (2005); Bryman, (2008); Andrews, (2012); Thomas, (2013) and Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault, (2016). It identifies the elements within three paradigms (collected from several sources) and highlights which elements are used from each in the current project (see green text) which indicates the contributions from different writers (with blue references). The red text links the chosen elements to different parts of the research project in an attempt to be clear and transparent about how each element has been used. Each element has then been explained and matched to the current study in line with the research questions and project aims through the following sections of the methodology. Additionally, as suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) some elements are used across positivist and post-positivist stances (see merged cells).

Table 3.3: Paradigm synthesis: an exploration of elements for post-positivism

Paradigm → **Elements** ↓	***Positivist***	***Post-positivist***	***Interpretivist/ constructivist***
Ontology	Realist – findings are true of an independent reality (Andrews, 2012; Guba and Lincoln, 1994)	Critical realism - Reality can be approximated but never fully understood. (Bhaksar, 2011; Collier, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1994) Asking participants for their perceptions is the best way to represent lived experiences and knowledge can be reflected through those perceptions (Henderson, 2011) Due to the focus on perceptions, this is the stance taken for the current project, for the purposes of both quantitative	Relativist – Nothing can be known for certain due to unreliable constructs of knowledge. There are therefore multiple realities.

Table 3.3: Paradigm synthesis: an exploration of elements for post-positivism

Paradigm → **Elements** ↓	***Positivist***	***Post-positivist***	***Interpretivist/ constructivist***
		and qualitative data collection and as a result of the literature reviewed on social constructivism (see Appendix F).	(Burr, 1995 and Andrews, 2012)
Epistemology	Objective and researcher is 'external' to knowledge Researcher values are excluded and researcher influence is denied. The researcher is unlikely to affect responses as a knowledge creator, since they are detached, and knowledge is not co-created alongside participants (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Bryman, 2008) In the distribution and completion of questionnaires the researcher remained 'detached' (i.e. did not converse with students after the initial introduction) so as to not influence student responses). The focus groups and interviews were led by the researcher who controlled the topic of conversation, but this was not seen to influence student responses since personal researcher perceptions were not made evident during the activities. Researcher creates knowledge through imposed frameworks. Students revealed knowledge as a response to a structure which was developed and implemented by the researcher. Questionnaires, interview and focus group questions and PIB statements were developed by the researcher. Although there was great flexibility in the questions and the flow of conversation, the topic was chosen and led by the researcher and deemed to be the main purpose for the activity. If conversation steered away from the topic, the researcher would listen and steer the focus back. Although focus groups could be seen to be better positioned in the interpretivist section, these groups were highly structured and asked students to undertake a sorting activity based on PIB statements and then to comment on reasons for their choices. In the pilot study students were asked to comment on the PIB statements. Did they think there were enough, had any been missed any out, could they suggest any more? Although this		Subjective: responses are co-created, and researcher is part of the knowledge. Knowledge constructed through democratic means (co-constructed). Based on understandings and reconstruction. Includes researcher values

Table 3.3: Paradigm synthesis: an exploration of elements for post-positivism

Paradigm → **Elements** ↓	***Positivist***	***Post-positivist***	***Interpretivist/ constructivist***
	process appeared democratic, students were asked to make suggestions based around a given framework and the researcher was clear in the questions being asked, so this activity had a positivist purpose/underpinning, whilst being open to students' views. (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Bryman, 2008)		and can be seen as formative. (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Thomas, 2013)
Use of terms	Construct validity (Cronbach, 1971) Reliability Objectivity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Bryman, 2008) (used where appropriate when reflecting on the findings and methods used)		Credibility transferability, Dependability, Confirmability (Lichtman, 2013; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) Trustworthiness (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault, 2016)
Research processes	Procedures are established at the outset and structured guidelines for	Flexible in being inductive and deductive, where appropriate	Strategies and research design

Table 3.3: Paradigm synthesis: an exploration of elements for post-positivism

Paradigm → **Elements** ↓	***Positivist***	***Post-positivist***	***Interpretivist/ constructivist***
	data collection must be adhered to (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) Hypothesis is tested (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005)	(Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Bryman, 2008; Guba and Lincoln, 1994) The researcher set out how the focus groups were to run, the questions to be asked and the activities to be undertaken. The researcher needed to both explore a pre-determined structure of PIB (which reflects the testing of a hypothesis) but also be open to identifying new associations where appropriate and adding to/adapting PIB statements where students felt it was necessary during the focus groups. However, the purpose underpinning this involvement of students' ideas was structured. Questionnaires were completed in silence and if students misunderstood questions and needed help the researcher would not give examples but would read the question to them and ask them what they thought it meant, putting the onus on them to provide responses (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) Initially (in the pilot study) students were asked about social class but this was not received positively and made students feel uncomfortable, so it was removed from further study. As there were many other variables to explore, this was not seen as problematic to the current study. Mixed methods:	open to change/is flexible in response to student interest and agenda. Inductive Based on researcher understandings and re-construction. (Guba and Lincoln, 1994)

Table 3.3: Paradigm synthesis: an exploration of elements for post-positivism

Paradigm → **Elements** ↓	***Positivist***	***Post-positivist***	***Interpretivist/ constructivist***
		A mix of tools was used: questionnaires, focus groups and interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Bryman, 2008; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).	
Analysis procedures	Complex statistical measures are often used (Quantitative) Denzin and Lincoln, 2005	Statistical procedures are likely to use exploratory procedures to explore, discover or verify a theory Categorical Factor Analysis (CFA) was used in SPSS to identify whether associations can be made between perceptions of different behaviours. Researcher interprets the information and creates initial codes so that data is categorised by theme Thematic analysis took place using the computer programme NVIVO to categorise the language used by students to describe their parental behaviours. The way in which this was carried out had a positivist underpinning through creation and use of PIB statements. Codes were considered and created before data was explored in a mind-map form, although themes were then edited based on student responses. Although the focus group discussions influenced the creation of the questionnaires and the questionnaire responses influenced the interview questions, the questions and activities asked in the focus groups were pre-planned and highly structured, reflecting a positivist foundation which was seen to feed through the research tools. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005)	Thematic analysis No imposed framework or underpinning research agenda. Codes are developed after looking at information. (Lichtman, 2013)

Table 3.3 is adapted from Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and added to through exploration of literature (Andrews, 2012; Bryman, 2008; Collier, 1994; Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault, 2016; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Lichtman, 2013 and Thomas, 2013). Whilst having exploratory aspects, post-positivism can also seek to verify theory as well as being open to discovery in line with the current study. PIB statements were the main tool used to gather student perceptions and were open to adaptation based on student responses in the interviews and focus groups. However, as these aspects were framed around a positivist starting point they therefore had positivist intentions, seating the project firmly in the realm of post-positivism. Statements of PIB were developed from earlier masters' research which identified that certain behaviours tended to group together. However, it could not be presumed that responses in this doctoral research would necessarily fall into these categories and the researcher was open in considering alternative groupings of different PIB. This reflects post-positivist tendencies as:

A) A concept was presented to be tested and a clear procedure for attempting to categorise student perceptions was established but open to interpretation

B) The researcher was flexible in being both inductive and deductive, where the researcher saw it was appropriate

The complex nature of the parental-student interactions was investigated. In this way, the nature of the study can be described as 'exploratory' research: A 'control' group was not used. The researcher did not test, intervene with and then re-test students in a 'value-added' experiment. The focus related to understanding students' perceptions regarding parental involvement in a number of different ways. In this way, the project is reflective of a case-study approach because it gathered multiple perspectives in one institution and intends to provide a rich picture. Hamilton (2011) suggests that case studies using multiple perspectives and a mix of research tools "lends weight to the validity of findings" within the

education domain specifically (Hamilton, 2011, p.2). Validity is discussed alongside triangulation in section 3.3.1.4.

3.2.4 A case study

The context of this study reflects a case study approach as it is centred within one FE College. Therefore, generalisations cannot be presumed; rather 'insights' can be revealed into this complex phenomenon of student perceptions, parental behaviours, student-parent relationships and the interplay between them for one college context. As Hamilton (2011) describes, case studies are a means to create a rich picture through different kinds of data collection and are concerned with the perspectives of lived experiences within a context. Similarly, Curtis, Murphy and Shields (2014) describe a case study as having a set of defining criteria that can justify it as a 'case' (i.e. research based on one phenomenon in one setting, as for the current study) but also note that generality in this context is a challenge. Indeed, generality is a problem in relation to other colleges and other institutions who work with students aged 16+. School sixth-forms, as an example, may contain students of the same age whose perceptions differ wildly from those communicated in a college environment and so reporting of the findings needs to be clear about the limitations of case study research in this context. Interestingly, Menter et al, (2011) describe case studies as providing depth of knowledge as they usually involve small numbers of participants and are usually limited to a purely qualitative type of enquiry (although they acknowledge, as in the current study, that multiple methods are likely to be used). However, due to the nature of the case study college context in which there were 240 students, small numbers of students were not a limitation for the current project. Additionally, the data was not limited to qualitative findings but included large amounts of quantitative data to provide a holistic insight into perceptions of parental involvement (see section 3.2.5).

It has also been noted that case studies use 'intensive investigation' to generate a 'test theory', (Walliman, 2016, p.232) as the current study has done (see Figure 4.7 in the findings section). When discussing the case study approach, Hamilton (2011) recognises

that one disadvantage is the extent to which the work can be generalised to other contexts or studies of this kind. She explains that the nature of a case study is that it focuses in depth and may be reflective of a particular context that is unique. This links with the ideas of Walliman (2016) since, although work cannot be generalised, theory can be created that can be tested in other similar college contexts. However, there is no reason to suggest that this is a limitation to the current study so long as the research is viewed within the context in which it was undertaken. Further, Thomas (2013) suggests that a case study can be a 'snapshot' of perceptions at a particular moment in time and for most students, this was the case. However, because some students took part in more than one data collection activity (see section 3.3.1), findings could be triangulated to check for consistency of perceptions across a data collection period of eight months. It is also important to note that Hamilton (2011) also describes that use of case studies may not completely transform understanding but is likely to refine understanding about a particular phenomenon which reflects the nature and scale of this project and the age group it explored. The current study was clear in its approach to refine understanding due to the presentation of the groups of DAPSS, PAPSS, PEAV and NEAV which were explored and adapted to create different categories which represented student experiences in the college context. Additionally, it was presumed that some parental involvement would be likely to be received positively by the students, but the nature of that involvement in relation to subtle emotional support was an example of understanding being 'refined'.

3.2.5 Critical engagement with mixed methods

This section offers a critical discussion regarding the use of mixed methods. The use of mixed methods is critiqued to tease out the problems identified by other researchers and to justify its use for this project in answering the research questions. 'Mixed methods' simply refers to the use of data collection instruments that combine qualitative and quantitative data (Bryman, 2008). One main advantage of this is that mixed methods looks to accommodate triangulation procedures, heightening validity of findings (Lichtman, 2013). Importantly,

mixed methods research has been identified as appropriate in addressing complex environments, specifically in education (Scoles, Huxham and McArthur, 2014) in which the current study sits. Scoles, Huxham and McArthur (2014) specifically identify that the value of using mixed methods research in education is that quantitative and qualitative data can be analysed together. As well as using insights from one method to inform another (as the current project has done) it also highlights how findings can complement one another using triangulation techniques.

Smith and Heshusius (1986) explored the debates between researchers drawn to the two main paradigms (positivism and interpretivism) and report that many researchers hold the view that a mixed methods approach could not work effectively since elements of the two paradigms are incompatible (called incompatibility thesis). However, Henderson (2011) identifies that "post-positivism legitimises the potential for using mixed methods" (Henderson, 2011, p.343) as has been shown in Table 3.3. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) Clark (1998), Henderson (2011) Bryman, (2008) and Scoles, Huxham and McArthur (2014) have identified that the use of mixed methods is becoming more common and they fully advocated that researchers should be free to use any method deemed appropriate to their research questions. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) maintain that research questions are dominant over the paradigm in which the research fits and encourages the use of both positivist and interpretivist practices provided that they are justified in relation to the nature of the study and the research questions. This is echoed by Clark (1998) who states that methods must be selected specifically in relation to the research question and advocates the use of post-positivist practices. However, Howe (2004, p.57) further criticises mixed methods calling it an 'ominous development'. It has also been suggested that using mixed methods usually assumes a hierarchy where quantitative methods are highest and that qualitative methods are relegated and are seen by the researcher as less important (Howe, 2004). Creswell (2011) too recognises that this may be viewed as a limitation and questions whether in mixed methods research there is a dominant discourse. He identifies that

removing qualitative, interpretivist methods from their natural home can be seen by researchers as problematic as often these methods are demoted behind positivist ways of working. The mixed methods approach has also been described as problematic due to the polarisation of the two paradigms since qualitative work is usually exploratory and quantitative work is more likely to be confirmatory (Howe, 2004). Conversely, Henderson (2011) and Denscombe (2008) celebrate the use of mixed methods, agreeing that one purpose of mixed methods is related to improving accuracy of gathering perceptions. Denscombe (2008) elaborates by suggesting that it allows the researcher to gain a complete picture of social phenomenon gathered from different angles; a stance strongly advocated for the use of mixed methods within the current project.

Despite some criticisms of the mixed method approach it is important to be clear that combining elements of each (in a post-positivist stance) can be advantageous so long as they do not contradict or problematise the research in question (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Clark, 1998). Using post-positivist practices can be seen as valuable in the context of this project in that it creates a structure in which to collect and explore both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a fuller understanding of the behaviours and perceptions involved. If mixing elements from traditional paradigms satisfies, fulfils and strengthens a project in line with the research aims, then despite some negative reactions from others, there is no reason to suggest it should be rejected. This thought is echoed by Wildemuth (1993) and Clark (1998) who identified that using elements from traditional paradigms should not be viewed as problematic so long as the methodological choices are fit for purpose and methods are chosen in accordance to the research questions.

It is salient that the concept of mixed methods is not criticised abstractly because the context in which it is carried out in conjunction with its ‘fitness for purpose’ in relation to the research questions and research aims is of most importance. Additionally, the idea that using mixed methods is problematic because it results in a relegation of one paradigm below another is futile. There is no reason to suggest that the traditional research paradigms need to be

honoured to protect them from being abused by being used in a non-traditional way. Indeed, Guba and Lincoln (1994) note that paradigms are simply a set of beliefs that are constructed by researchers and so do not have to be proved or used in a particular way. Post-positivist practices should be used appropriately in research when their use is dictated by research questions and researcher choice so long as they are justified and the research remains ethical and explores important concepts such as validity/reliability in light of the paradigm choice. Use of mixed methods (tools and strategies) specific to this project will be explored in more detail later.

The 'mixed method' strategies used are focus groups, questionnaires and interviews and have been chosen because they:

a) Provide the researcher with various sets of data which are both quantitative and qualitative in line with information necessary to answer the research questions

b) Enable students multiple opportunities to access and to respond to questions relating to parental involvement

c) Allow data to be 'checked' for reliability (triangulation - explained in more detail below)

d) Serve to ensure that this project is allowing optimum opportunity to gain different kinds of responses, unlike many other parental involvement research projects

e) Allow participant responses to feed into and influence areas of interest in subsequent research tools (i.e. focus group themes fed into the questions developed for the questionnaires. This ensured that the project was flexible in response to students' interests/issues and that lines of enquiry could be made a focus for qualitative research in relation to particular research questions and overall project direction.

It has been rare that other researchers completing work with a similar focus have used mixed methods (the only one identified to use a triangulation technique was Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) who used observation, interviews and surveys) and many have relied

upon questionnaires/surveys as the only method for gaining responses (Dumont et al, 2014; Dubose et al, 2014; Blair, 2014; Fan, Williams and Wolters, 2012; Chen and Ho, 2012; Ceballo et al, 2012; Lam and Ducreux, 2013).

Although there are varied views on the use of mixed method approaches, it is felt that the current study benefitted from the use of both quantitative and qualitative method choices due to the diverse nature of the research questions and therefore incorporated elements taken from the post-positivist paradigm. The triangulation technique used several strategies to gather data. One purpose is to ensure that findings are more credible and can be used to establish validity (Lichtman, 2013). Research design, therefore, reflected a detailed, multi-dimensional approach so as to explore all areas in question. The study would be limited if its focus consisted of one approach and would cause the final research picture to have a narrow view which would fail to reflect all the issues concerning this complex domain. Mixed method approaches ensured that responses were gleaned from students in a variety of ways and responses could be checked for reliability using a triangulation approach which is commonly used in case study research through different research tools (Hamilton, 2011).

3.2.6 A critical perspective of the role of the insider researcher

Although the idea of researcher detachment has been broached in sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3, a critical perspective of the role of the insider researcher is presented in more detail below, to be clear about its potential impact.

Prior to engaging in the current project, the researcher had been immersed in FE culture for eight years as a lecturer meaning that research choices (both for data collection and analysis) were, ‘inevitably shaped by existing assumptions, relations, prejudices, values and experiences’ (Curtis, Murphy and Shields, 2014, p.87) as discussed below. Indeed, as Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2006) suggest, the researcher can impact a project in a powerful way and is often unrecognised. Reflexivity in research goes beyond merely contemplating the influences of research topic and methods selected and also involves the perceptions of

the researcher in their analysis of information and how this supports or challenges their existing thoughts and concepts surrounding a topic of interest. Although it is undoubtedly difficult to change, challenge or fully understand any such researcher influences, the project findings will need to be viewed with this aspect in mind and acknowledgement and exploration of the potential influences that this may have posed to data collection and data analysis is important to recognise in the context of this research project.

The following section will offer a critical perspective on both the dual roles of the insider researcher and will be reflexive when considering the relationship between the researcher, their values and subsequent choices for data collection and analysis.

3.2.6.1 The challenges of undertaking a dual role

Researchers who are members of the community or institution under investigation through employment or other connection are said to be involved in insider research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). As eluded to in Huddleston and Unwin (2007), the context of FE is seen to be removed from any other education sector and, in doing so, it is extremely difficult for 'outsiders' to penetrate or fully understand it, suggesting that 'insiders' are at an advantage because they are more likely to understand the culture of FE (i.e. the expectations, customs and social behaviours in FE) and therefore draw more accurate conclusions. Additionally, Christians (2000) notes the advantages of insider researchers who are more likely to bring an element of intrinsic care into the research context due to feeling an affinity with the community and an association to the familiar culture.

In undertaking insider research, Noffke (2009) reports that researchers must navigate through a number of conundrums which may relate to personal, professional and political aspects. As noted by Humphrey (2012) insider researchers should be reflexive about their role and warns against becoming oblivious to any risks. Humphrey (2012) notes that insider research is a sensitive operation, since the likelihood of uncovering information may both pose a threat to an institution but also can ultimately jeopardise a project. This jeopardization

refers to the sensitivity of the insider role because of the researcher's awareness of background information and college culture which must not be seen to contaminate the research process in any way. Although this 'contamination' could potentially take various forms, the researcher made attempts to avoid this bias. The researcher attempted to remain as neutral as possible in the research process when interacting with students and did not reveal any personal perceptions, as the researcher had chosen to adopt a post-positivist position (discussed in section 3.3.4). Additionally, students who were taking part in the study had not been taught, nor were ever due to be taught by the researcher, since the researcher had made a transition to HE teaching instead of FE teaching when the research project was carried out, and so this ensured that no participants had had close contact with the researcher or could be unduly influenced by the researcher.

Humphrey (2012) also recognises these potential dilemmas specifically for insider researchers and segregates them into three categories. The first is 'ethical' which involves problems in relation to informed consent and confidentiality (this is briefly discussed below but is explored in detail in section 3.3.2). The second is 'professional' which refers to the collision of roles or confusion which stems from opting to undertake a dual role. The last dilemma is 'political' and has the potential to involve conflict among stakeholders for the educational institution and community. For clarity, the following section is structured into these three areas to allow transparency.

Ethical dilemmas for insider research: informed consent and confidentiality

Note – this section should be read alongside information provided in section 3.3.2. When discussing insider research, a problem in relation to consent is noted by Ryan (1996) who suggested that it is likely that potential role-conflicts arise when educators approach their own students to take part in research and that often, in these cases, all students agree to participate due to viewing the researcher as an authority figure within the institution and so their consent is based on factors which encourage their involvement. However, although the

researcher was a staff member, she was purposefully not a teacher for the cohort of level 3 students who were involved in the research and, as such, the students were unlikely to consent based on any prior relationship or connection to the researcher. Additionally, presuming that students will take part because the researcher is a member of staff does not give credit to the decision-making processes of adolescent students. Ten Cate (2009) argues that students should not be seen as a population which is vulnerable. Indeed, vulnerability suggests that students are not capable of making their own decisions as to whether they wish to participate or not and questioning whether they are competent to make their own choices is potentially patronising.

The way in which the different parties involved in research have the ability to combine through different rights, duties and interests is termed moral pluralism (Hugman, 2010). Moral pluralism suggests that individuals have different agendas, feelings, thoughts and motivations and that when they come together for research, there may be harmony or disagreement which is deemed to be interwoven into the research context and cannot be removed from it. In reflecting on rights, duties and interests of the different parties, the researcher developed a number of strategies to ensure students who did not want to participate did not feel undue pressure to do so and were able to make their choices as freely as possible. Firstly, the feeling of duty of students to engage in the project may have been influenced by the location and context in which they were asked to take part. The consensus at the case study college is that students are expected to become involved in classroom tasks and activities, so students may have felt a duty to contribute to the study and obliged to participate knowing that the researcher is a staff member and had gained access via the tutor. They may have additionally felt obliged to participate due to the knowledge that their tutor has agreed and encouraged the research process to happen within the classroom. Considering the potential feeling of duty for students to participate, the researcher made sure that students were given a number of options in regard to their choices for taking part and made it clear that if students did not wish to participate, that they

could complete other tasks provided by their class tutor, like they would in any usual tutorial. The researcher emphasised that participation was a choice and that students had an 'opt in' process as well as an 'opt out' process (see section 3.3.2). Secondly, students' feeling of interest may have been shaped by the researcher's enthusiasm for the topic which may have heightened students' interest which had not previously existed. Students had a right to participate (or not) and this decision may have been shaped due to any affinity they developed for either the topic or the researcher. In seeking student participation, the researcher also had a duty to provide full details of the project, to explain informed consent and to keep data confidential. In addition to this, the researcher had a duty to protect students, should any safeguarding issues arise (in which case the data becomes non-confidential because in the case of abuse it must be shared). The issues surrounding confidentiality and safeguarding were set out on the consent forms for each part of the project and are explained in section 3.3.2.5 and 3.3.2.4, respectively. The researcher also had a duty to uphold anonymity of responses. This was achieved by using pseudonyms in the reporting of data, not reporting the college name and not discussing student responses with other staff members.

The combinations of rights, duties and interests can contribute to the findings and conclusions made within a research project; hence when reporting research, the context (i.e. potential influences) should be considered thoroughly and be presented as transparently as possible. It is often difficult to predict how these rights, duties and interests can influence findings gleaned from a project, but it is important to acknowledge that they exist.

Professional dilemmas: a collision of roles

A staff badge was worn throughout the data collection process as is a college expectation when on campus. The badge allowed the researcher to be familiar to the students due to the label of 'belonging' to the college. This was seen to be an advantage because students would perceive the researcher to be an 'insider' and therefore someone who was

professional, trustworthy and familiar with FE college courses, students and the FE context. The researcher did not seek to hide their dual role from the students and introduced themselves in their role as a researcher but also as a lecturer at the college teaching Higher Education Foundation Degrees courses and with previous experience teaching FE.

One of the key aspects to consider when investigating the influences for insider research are whether the researcher views themselves as a member of the groups they are researching. Adler and Adler (1987) suggest that there are three membership roles: peripheral, active and complete. For the current project, the researcher sought to remain detached from the students in terms of 'belonging' to their group and so reflected a 'peripheral' role which reflects the nature of the role of staff member versus the student role. The researcher did not seek to belong, so much as to maintain a professional distance from the students which allowed the researcher to 'create' knowledge which is reflective of the post-positivist positioning that this project adopted. Although the researcher was open and friendly, they were clear to communicate a clear distinction of roles and professionalism which is expected in the context of education.

One advantage of being an insider, as noted by Shah (2004) is that researcher knowledge of the relevant patterns of social interaction within settings is important in both making meaning through participant perception and gaining access. Further, the familiarity within an organisational culture can add a greater level of candour when gathering data (Mercer, 2007). Indeed, Mercer (2007) highlights that 'outsider researchers' can lack experience in the setting and so lack intuitive sensitivities and therefore have lower levels of understanding of the context. This can affect the confidence with which the researcher can build rapport with participants and can therefore affect the participants' decision to feel comfortable in sharing or withholding information whereas an insider researcher is less likely to experience these difficulties. For the current study, the researcher was careful to build rapport by introduction of general information (i.e. which department the researcher was based and how long they had been teaching for) but did not offer any insight into personal perceptions

regarding the topic under scrutiny. This was likely to enable the students to feel comfortable with the process but not be influenced by the researcher.

In explaining the amount of detachment from participants, it is useful to use Hellawell's (2006), idea that insider research can be seen along a continuum between 'complete observer' to 'complete participant'. For the current study, in terms of belongingness to the participant group, the researcher positions themselves *away* from the 'participant' end of the continuum since, although they spoke to the participants, this was not to establish member status of the group and was purely to ask questions which gleaned relevant information from them in relation to PIB and not to share the researcher's own experiences. This is reflective of the idea of a peripheral role which is outside the group, as discussed previously (see Adler and Adler, 1987).

The project specifically did not involve any students who had been taught or were due to be taught by the researcher. This point was noted by Hockey (1993) who warned that previous contact may have allowed participants time to form preconceptions about both the researcher and the research topic. This choice was taken to avoid:

a) students' choice in participation being based around satisfying and pleasing the researcher
b) student responses being formed in relation to their knowledge of researcher values or background, for example.

Collecting data as an 'insider researcher' has been seen to pose a challenge in research in terms of data reflecting any personal researcher perception or bias (Mercer, 2007). However, there are a number of things that were put in place in the current study to avoid vulnerability to these associated challenges and the research conditions were made as objective (neutral) as possible, as this aligns with the post-positivist framework that the project reflects. As a general rule, the researcher saw themselves as external to knowledge and in doing so attempted to offer no personal opinions or examples when asking questions

(a problem identified by Powney and Watts (1987) who suggested that indicating personal perceptions could lead to the participants becoming distracted and offering biased responses). Although conversation was friendly and the researcher attempted to create a sense of 'openness' to allow students to feel relaxed, this was purely through interest in students' perceptions and personal researcher attitudes were not voiced or implied. However, neutrality was also demonstrated in other ways. For example, the researcher sought to remain neutral in relation to the topic of social class, which was initially considered by the researcher to be essential to parental involvement. However, the students rejected the researcher's conceptualisation of this in the pilot study and therefore in the main study despite the researcher's own personal biases and informed college insider position e.g. about parental involvement by working-class and middle-class parents/carers, the references to social class in the main study were removed, which demonstrates neutrality towards what was initially considered to be an important concept in FE education and student attainment.

Importantly, Mercer (2007) notes that 'insider' research and the potential for bias can be increased by the choice of topic. If, as a member of teaching staff, the researcher was asking about behaviour management in the classroom or different learning activities, then the students may have given responses that they thought would align with the researcher's perceptions. However, the topic of parental involvement is one that students are not likely to have been asked about previously (as found by Robinson and Harris, 2014) and so creates less of a problem in terms of biased or predictable responses. On the other hand, Merton (1972) rejects the problems of the insider/outsider researcher dichotomy completely, indicating that categorisation is more complex, since there are many factors that may affect how a researcher is perceived by participants (based on gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status) and each position has advantages and disadvantages. The participants did not refer to any of the researcher's identity factors (such as being a white middle-class

female) as impacting on how they perceived, interacted with or responded to the researcher prior to and during data collection.

Political dilemmas: stakeholder conflict

Humphrey (2012) claims that researchers are likely to have engaged in relevant experiences and have made conclusions based on information gathered but are unable or unwilling to publish or share findings which have the potential to be damaging to their status or their institutions' reputation. This may also be problematic because the audience for insider research in education may include current and/or prospective students or colleagues and managers. BERA (2018) notes that these considerations are important and that:

"researchers are encouraged to think carefully about how they position themselves and their research design, analysis and interpretation in relation to the interests of their sponsors and stake-holders. Any conflicts of interest or compromises to integrity of the research must be made clear and open to scrutiny" (BERA, 2018, pp.27-28).

The current project sought to establish whether the student voice and the college voice were in agreement with each other in relation to parental involvement. Although there was some discrepancy found between college policy maker perception and student perception, it is not the intention of this doctorate to communicate the findings in a negative way to the case study college. Reporting of all participants' data is anonymous so it is unlikely that the project will produce conflict or subsequent difficulties in regard to external stake-holders. Internally, where findings are shared with staff members, the project is predicted to provoke discussion around different student experiences and how the college (particularly tutors) thinks it is best to support these different groups of students. This is explored in more detail when discussing 'contributions to knowledge' (section 6.2) in chapter six.

3.2.6.2 Researcher background influences: Values and research choices and perceptions

As indicated earlier at the beginning of section 3.2.6, researcher experiences, values and assumptions which were formed prior to employment in FE will also play a part in the decision-making processes which have underpinned the project. As an example, researcher upbringing and feelings towards own experience of parental involvement and attainment influenced thinking in a number of ways for the project, including the initial desire to study this area of interest. Additionally, data analysis will have been influenced by researcher attributes and values/knowledge of PIB. Malterud (2001) defines this idea succinctly: 'the researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions' (Malterud, 2001, pp.483-484). Although this should not necessarily be viewed as a negative element, it acknowledges the complexities of conducting research, particularly into a topic that the researcher has experienced themselves. Indeed, both the researcher and participants will bring various ideas and attitudes when contributing to the research project.

Within the idea of moral pluralism (Hugman, 2010), it is also important to note that the researcher's influence cannot be limited to researcher values, prejudices, assumptions and previous experiences but will also be influenced by participant values, experiences, prejudices and assumptions including how the participants perceive the researcher. As identified by Angrosino (2005) researcher age, gender, ethnicity, social class, style of dress and personality are all factors that may have influenced participant choices; although how they were influential is very difficult to determine. The researcher's 'context' (i.e. the factors listed above) can be influential in whether the researcher develops 'membership identity' (i.e. whether the researcher is accepted) and this can affect both participants' decisions in whether to participate or not but also can influence participant responses. Indeed, research is context dependent and, as has been explored below, the researcher will inevitably

influence the research design and research tools, student participation and the choices that students made when revealing their perceptions during the data collection activities.

Influences for data collection

Despite the researcher's effort to avoid communicating personal perceptions of PIB when conducting the focus groups, questionnaires and interviews by consciously refraining from explaining their own experiences of parental involvement or from offering suggestions to participants, it was likely in some way that the researcher influenced the participants in that the participants may have made presumptions about researcher background, social class and views. The way in which questions were phrased through tone of voice and underlying intonation may have been informed by the researcher's own perceptions of 'positive parenting' and although the researcher tried to remain neutral and 'detach feelings' from the topic in hand (as reflects the post-positivist paradigm) it must be noted that complete detachment of views in these social encounters was extremely difficult (and also very hard to measure or combat). The epistemological position that the researcher adopted (see section 3.2.2) was not reflective of a co-construction of knowledge and the researcher saw themselves as a facilitator for *accessing* that knowledge (i.e. creating opportunity, tools and structure for participants to reveal their perceptions), but *not* as a contributor to it. Subjectivity and influence of student responses was minimised by asking questions using three different research tools, asking for clarification on any vague responses and not offering examples or own views.

When conducting the focus groups and interviews the researcher aimed to present herself as open and transparent and to build a friendly yet professional rapport so as to encourage the students to relax and share their feelings and views, but also to remain detached from having membership of the group by fulfilling the role of questioner and presenting oneself as a staff member, which allowed separation from participants. The researcher tried to establish rapport with the students at the outset. Lichtman (2013) indicated that time often needed to

be included at the beginning of data collection activities so that rapport could be established, which would lead to a relaxed atmosphere. Lichtman (2013) also discussed a technique called self-disclosure where the interviewer shares something that makes a connection to the participant. The researcher used her role at the college to make a connection by describing the subjects taught and the number of years employed at the college. Lichtman (2013) suggests that these stories serve to allow the researcher to present themselves as approachable and encourage students to want to share knowledge and experiences.

Lichtman (2013) describes that in her experience with adolescents, a “shocking” response is often offered to create attention. It was difficult to say whether students’ responses were meant to be received as ‘shocking’ or whether the students were just openly expressing their opinion. Therefore, if the researcher thought any response needed clarification they would ask students to explain their point further to back up their comments. Lichtman (2013) also reports that adolescents may feel a pressure to give the ‘correct’ response. The researcher tried not to reveal personal perceptions when conversing with students and reiterated that they wished to investigate different experiences which should challenge the idea that there may be a ‘correct’ response. Again, it is hard to decipher how students perceived the researcher’s background, ethnicity, gender, social class and personal views because they were not discussed with the students. Students may well have judged or presumed the researcher’s stance on parental involvement, even though this was not made known to the students, but this could not be avoided nor measured.

The majority of lecturers at the college are between mid-30s and 50s and, as such, it could be presumed that the researcher (within the bracket of 25-34 years) was likely to connect with the students due to age. As mentioned previously, it must also be noted that social class background/personal perceptions and body language might have influenced how the students viewed the researcher and may have subsequently affected the way in which they participated with the study. It is very difficult to comment on how these factors may or may not have influenced student responses because the researcher did not ask the participants

about their perceptions of the researcher and whether or not this influenced the responses/comments they made. Arguably, every individual was likely to identify with the researcher in a slightly different way.

All research is dependent upon a number of variables that may never repeat in the same way on subsequent occasions. Many researchers have identified this problem (Thomas, 2013; Lichtman, 2013; Walliman, 2016 and Palaiologou, Needham and Male, 2016) and conclude that social sciences data often offers insights instead of generalisations (Thomas, 2013). The idea of insights is reflected in the findings of the current project, which is clear in its presentation as a case study in one college context.

Influences for data analysis

The choices for data analysis for the quantitative data were statistically based, meaning that researcher bias for this analysis was minimised. Researcher bias was more likely to be reflective in the management and understanding of qualitative information gleaned from three different research tools: focus groups, questionnaires and interviews. Undoubtedly, each stage of the thematic analysis had the potential to be influenced by researcher values, assumptions and experiences in the way that information was organised in NVIVO. As an example, because expectations were specifically asked about in the data collection process, the researcher knew that the theme of expectations would be apparent in the responses. Indeed, predicted themes were likely to be easier to identify than unexpected themes. Some initial nodes were created by the researcher in response to the pilot study data and the researcher's initial thoughts regarding important themes. Although this may appear biased, the researcher adapted the nodes to create a multi-level hierarchy which was then split into two hierarchies to reflect the intrinsic and extrinsic nature of the PIB reported by students. These hierarchies were adapted and developed as the data was being analysed in response to any new qualitative data that was analysed. The levels of the hierarchy were changed and edited continuously as a core part of the analysis process. This demonstrates a sense of

openness to exploring responses. Triangulation of findings across qualitative responses ensured that students' responses could be checked and, more importantly, meaning could be applied with a greater element of trustworthiness. The hierarchy in NVIVO was adapted in response to new participant quotes throughout the course of the analysis. The researcher's starting point for the project centred on the idea that parental involvement at FE level was a grey area and that during adolescence, parents/carers had little contact with the college, despite the college attempting to reach out to them. In this way, the researcher may have been seeking the ideas of autonomy and independence that presented themselves within student responses and could have predicted that these themes would be apparent. Although these themes were apparent, they did not reflect every student experience and, as can be seen in the final LoID, some experiences were diverse. Due to the nature of the thorough interrogation of information, following Bazeley's (2016) recommendations, the experiences of the minority groups in the study (see Chapter Four) were able to be realised amongst the wealth of information, which reflects the careful analysis process in which the researcher engaged.

There are many influences for research which need to be acknowledged and reflected upon and the findings for the current project need to be viewed within the context of the researcher being a 'detached' insider, since the students were never directly taught by the researcher, but the researcher was employed at the case study college. The researcher sets out five statements below which summarise the researcher's perception of their involvement in the study:

1) The commonality between researcher and student was purely limited to:
a) The environment (space) in which they shared at the time of data collection
b) Mutual connection to the college (although undertaking very different roles within it)
c) Joint knowledge of the college BTEC courses
d) Joint knowledge of classroom codes, expectations for behaviour and appropriate communication techniques within an educational setting.

2) The researcher can only hypothesise about the influence on student participation, level of engagement, uptake and choices for responses, since the researcher did not directly ask students about these aspects.
3) The researcher attempted to create a rapport with students for the following reasons:
    a) It is the researcher's nature to be welcoming and friendly
    b) It is polite to show an interest in people on first meeting them
    c) It is the expectation as a teacher or guest into a classroom to engage successfully with a class group and make them feel comfortable and empowered by communicating the idea that their involvement and opinions matter.
4) There is a huge distinction between creating a rapport with students (as set out for the reasons above) and influencing student responses. Creating a rapport preceded the consent for participation in the study and the researcher did not offer her own views about parental involvement practices or behaviours.
5) Since it is hard to decipher how much or in what ways the researcher influenced the data collection and analysis processes, the triangulation process becomes ever-more important. Triangulation was achieved in a number of ways throughout the project, such as looking at student responses to different questions within one research tool and also between different research tools (see section 3.3.1.4).

3.3 Methods

This section explains how the research was undertaken in the college context and includes data collection, ethical considerations and data analysis.

3.3.1 Data collection

3.3.1.1 Justification for data collection choices

Exploration of the existing projects in relation to parental involvement and attainment in the literature review found that analysing perceptions of behaviours quantitatively and relating these to student outcomes was a common practice. This method of working was not seen as problematic so long as data were checked for reliability and the statistical significance was tested (i.e. the associations cannot merely be down to chance); a process identified as important by, for example, Field (2013). Three of the studies featured in the literature review used claimed to use a mix of research tools (Robinson and Harris, 2014; Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried, 2013 and Wang and Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). However, although Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried's (2013) study used observation and 'in home' interviews with the mother, data gathered was fully structured into 'yes' and 'no' categories to answer questions such as: "does mother read to child?" and "the mother works on academic skills with the child" and is therefore limited by its dichotomous nature. Using only two variables is restrictive in gaining an insight into the nature of parental involvement. This severely limits understanding because it fails to draw out information about the quality of those interactions and measuring the extent to which students agree that those behaviours are detected or, importantly, how they feel about them and how they are influenced by them. Wang and Sheikh-Khalil, (2014) and Robinson and Harris (2014) too critique their own work for failing to investigate the qualities of the interactions. As an example, Wang and Sheikh-Khalil's (2014) interviews appeared to be conducted in a fully structured manner with parents responding to questions using a 5-point Likert scale response technique where 1 = 'never' and 5 = 'very often'. Despite using the process of 'mixed methods', the tools appear to gain quantitative data only as the interview appears to be described as merely a spoken survey. The current project

focuses on the extent to which students agree that they observe parental behaviours whilst teasing out the qualities of these interactions by providing opportunities for qualitative feedback.

Additionally, the paradigm choices for the studies featured in the literature review were largely reflective of positivism. Most explored associations between parental involvement strategies and children's attainment through positivist practices (i.e. an emphasis on realism/imposing a researcher devised framework/using wholly quantitative data) and scientific statistical analysis procedures whereas the current project investigated PIB using three different tools and included both qualitative and quantitative data to gain a holistic view of PIB which produced data that could be triangulated.

3.3.1.2 The order of data collection

The current study was conducted using focus groups, questionnaires and interviews. The order of the data collection was integral to the formation of a picture of student perceptions of PIB using mixed methods. Focus groups were used initially to gather student perceptions in relation to the PIB statements and begin to unpick the most important themes for students, which then informed questionnaire development. The questionnaire asked students to respond to Likert-scale PIB statements on a larger scale and asked for more information regarding important themes for students by providing space for qualitative responses. The questionnaire Likert scale responses to question 14 ("Having my parents/carers more involved with my college work would make me attain a higher grade") paved the way for the interview participants, who were contacted based on the strength of their responses to this question and on their willingness to be involved further in the study. The data collection explanation below (section 3.3.1.4) in this chapter is reflective of this ordering, since it matches the chronological order of research activity completed for the current project and justifies this ordering. However, for the purposes of data analysis, (in section 3.3.3) and reporting of findings (Chapter Four) the structure is ordered by Research Question for clarity.

3.3.1.3 Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to test the research instruments (focus groups, questionnaires and interviews) for the main study. This section details and justifies the changes made to these instruments along with any important observations about the research processes.

Reflections and adaptations

Focus groups

The pilot focus groups involved three groups of students studying different subject areas and involved twelve students altogether. The pilot focus groups asked students questions that attempted to reveal their social class through the use of seven existing categories (Savage et al, 2013). Discussing social class made all groups feel uneasy and, in each group, students commented that they did not really understand why it was important in society to segregate people into groups but also noted that answering so many questions about specific elements regarding their social class was too intrusive and made them feel uncomfortable. This may be reflective of the issue in general and not specifically due to the Savage et al (2013) model. Many commented that they did not know their parents' hobbies or the jobs held by their friends and questioned why this related to them. One group commented that the concept of the 'social classes' in itself had been created by 'middle or upper class posh people' which for them was a limitation of the notion of social class in itself. Due to the participants' negative feeling towards categorising students into social classes, this aspect was not included in the main study. However, the researcher was still interested in elements such as parental qualifications and socio-economic status in relation to student attainment and so students were given the opportunity in the questionnaire (see section 3.3.1.4 and Appendix J) to answer a small number of questions about these aspects without the requirement of student identification with specific social classes.

On one occasion a female student tried to dominate the group. This was managed by slowly bringing the conversation to a close and asking another question, specifically making eye contact with a different member of the group or inviting responses from others (i.e. thank you for that – that's really interesting. What do other people think about this?) Alternatively, if students appeared to need space and opportunity to 'vent' their feelings, the researcher specifically chose not to interrupt or change the topic of conversation too quickly as it was felt that the students should benefit from and identify a sense of ownership for the focus groups.

One of the focus groups was quieter and less forthcoming with ideas than the rest and so the researcher asked more questions to compensate, instead of leaving a silence. However, on reflection it seemed that these students just needed more thinking time and researcher patience. Therefore, in the main study focus groups the researcher was more aware of the need to wait for student responses. Having a few moments of silence in conversation did not hinder the discussion and it gave students more time to think.

At the end of the focus groups students were asked about the process to find out what they thought about the discussion, whether they felt intimidated or at ease and what they had learnt from the process. Students were asked to comment on this individually and it was noted that:

- the topic was of interest to them
- it made them reflect and appreciate or contemplate their position/experiences
- they felt relaxed and liked the informal nature of the discussions
- they felt that they could be honest and not be judged
- they trusted that the information would be kept confidential.

Students were also asked to recall how they felt about the PIB statements and whether they were reflective of their experiences. Specifically, they were asked to comment on whether any more statements should be added and whether anything had been overlooked. One of

the PIB statements could be seen to have a double inference: “I value a good education like my parents”. Some students may value a good education but this may be different to their parents. It was decided that this question should be rephrased in the main study to: “I value a good education”. Two other opposing PIB statements included the words ‘presume’ and ‘assume’. However, students voiced that they did not understand why this language had been used so in the main study it was changed to ‘believe’. Other adjustments included giving the DAPSS and PAPSS categories an equal number of statements so that each statement has an opposing ‘partner’ statement. DAPSS had only 5 items in the pilot whereas PAPSS had 8. These were changed to create seven opposing statements for each. Two PAPSS statements were merged because they were seen as too similar to each other. “My parents/carers are always willing to talk to me about college work if I ask them to” and *“*My parents/carers talk to me about my college work, rather than getting involved with the essay writing itself” were merged to read: “my parents/carers are willing to talk to me about college work, rather than get involved with the essay writing”.

In reviewing the pilot focus groups it was noted that students were eager to talk more than had been anticipated and so the pilot focus groups went on for longer than planned, with one particular group lasting forty minutes. This provided lots of rich information but took a long time to transcribe and was noted at times to drift off topic. This experience led to the decision that in future groups within the main study the time to direct/break conversation needed to be down to the researcher’s judgement of how rich the conversation was (in relation to PIB), whether it had veered off topic but also how the students appeared to be feeling. Indeed, the researcher’s choices in managing the conversation is reflective of the post-positivist paradigm in that the researcher offers direction through a change of subject and therefore is the knowledge creator (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Bryman, 2008). Logistical choices were made by observing through body language i.e. were students hunched over the desk or looking out of the window? Was one student monopolising the group? What percentage of the group was engaged with the discussion at any one time? The researcher’s skills were

swiftly developed to react and manage group dynamics. Techniques were developed to keep the topic on track and observe social cues i.e. to wait for pauses in conversation and then direct students using a specific question.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire initially had all the PIB PAPSS behaviours together and all the DAPSS behaviours together. It was noted that this was a biased way of presenting information to the students and was likely to encourage them to answer in a certain way. Therefore, in the main study questionnaire the PIB statements were completely mixed up (throughout questions 4, 5, 7 and 8) so that students had to read and answer each one individually, which was more likely to produce valid responses.

It was also realised that in grouping PAPSS and DAPSS and giving them an overall 'score' for each category of behaviours, students' views would not be represented fairly if they missed out any PIB in the set i.e. It would not be representative to 'total' their score because 0 would equal 'strongly disagree' and not 'neutral'. If students did miss any PIB statements out, their overall PAPSS or DAPSS total could therefore not be used. However, PIB could still be used on an individual basis for analysis purposes and overall score was (in the end) not necessary because the DAPSS and PAPSS categories were challenged and re-modelled and so were not seen as a reliable 'set'.

The pilot questionnaires also attempted to use GCSE results as a way of gathering details about students' attainment so that the analysis tools could be tested. However, this structure was not robust enough and was not comparable between students due to the different ways students inputted their results into the table in the questionnaire. Some students did not write GCSEs down at all, some only wrote down their maths and English grades, some only wrote grades that were a C or above and left the others and some had qualifications from overseas which would be time-consuming to check for comparability. These scores were used to attempt to find links between attainment and PIB using the statistical analysis programme

SPSS. However, no associations were made. It is suggested that this was largely due to the unreliable way in which these scores were generated. Therefore, GCSE scores were not used in the main study and attainment was based solely on UCAS point scores which had been converted from the students' BTEC level three scores using a comparison table (see Appendix G).

Another finding from the pilot questionnaire was that the information provided on the front about the nature of the study used academic and technical language that may have confused (or not been understood by) the students. In the main study, the language was changed into simpler terms and the length of explanation was reduced so students would not be overwhelmed in reading it.

The boxes which sought to gather qualitative information were made slightly smaller in the main study as no student filled all the space in the pilot study and a tick box was introduced to identify if any students were home tutored. This allowed for easier exclusion of students from the main study who had a home tutor as the focus is on direct relationships (between parent/carer and student) which do not involve outside support systems and are not concerned with economic support (e.g. parents paying for a home-tutor).

When using Likert scales, numbers were used to signal participants to 'how much' they are agreeing or disagreeing with something. For the pilot study, the numbers were 4-0 for strongly agree-strongly disagree. However, it was decided that these numbers should be changed to 5-1 in the main study, because it was deemed that students may not feel comfortable with selecting the category labelled 0. This suggestion was made by an experienced colleague and was adopted.

A line was added to the front cover of the questionnaire in the main study so students could provide their college number. This was seen as important for analysis purposes, as when it was necessary to efficiently access student grades online, a college number was needed so that grades could be gathered and matched to student responses.

It was also observed that it was good practice to offer participants the opportunity to be sent a copy of the final project and outcomes. Therefore, a box was provided on the front cover of the main questionnaire and a line where students could write their email address if they chose to.

When reviewing pilot questionnaire responses, there were times when students appeared to have misinterpreted questions or had gone slightly off topic. Therefore, a number of these questions were adapted in the main study questionnaire to ensure the information gathered answered the question set. These changes are set out below:

- Question 6a asked students to comment on parent responsiveness to grades. This method of collecting information involved the researcher reading the responses after questionnaire completion and putting students into categories of agree or disagree. At times it was unclear whether students agreed or disagreed as some students offered comments that did not appear to fully relate to the question asked. Therefore, the structure for this question was changed so that students were encouraged to decide on their stance first (by circling agree or disagree) and supporting this answer by providing space for a longer comment/justification.
- Question 9 was added as it was felt that students should be asked about their parents' values of formal qualifications (A levels) and BTEC qualifications.
- Question 10 read 'as I have got older' and on reflection this was quite vague and did not allow for specific details/timescales to be realised. This was changed to be more specific in terms of ages and was altered to "as you started college" and then became question eleven, instead of ten (see above)
- Question 12 was also split up to allow for differences in opinion between the amount of involvement and what kinds of involvement offered by parents/carers can be dictated by the student. Additionally, instead of using the word 'dictate', the word 'control' was preferable, as some students appeared to be unsure of this meaning and so asked for clarification when filling out the questionnaire. Question 12 also

benefitted from a change in frequency to include: All the time, most of the time, sometimes, not often, and never. This became question 13.

- No participants expanded on their answers to question 13 using the lines provided. Reasons for this may relate to lack of time to reflect fully or that students were ready for a change of activity as this was the final question of the questionnaire. It was decided that this question would be changed to a simple Likert scale and then explored in more detail in the interviews. It became question 14.

The adapted (final) questionnaire can be found in Appendix J.

Interviews

The pilot interviews were seen as too short (only lasting about 9 minutes) and did not provide as much rich data as was expected because there were too few questions. Additional questions were inserted in the main interviews to allow more rich data to be collected. These were:

- Would you want your parents/carers to be more involved?
- Do you control the amount/type of support you receive or do they control it?
- Do you think YOUR attitude to your college education influences their involvement?
- Who has the most influence in how well you do: parents, lecturers/tutors or peers? (This question was introduced because in the pilot study students referred to peers and/or additional support from elsewhere.)
- What motivates you to work hard and aim for certain grades?

During the pilot interviews, it was noted that if students were silent for a while and were struggling to answer a question the researcher would often offer ideas and jump in too quickly if a student appeared stuck. However, it was soon realised that just because students were not talking, it did not mean that they did not understand the question but may just mean that they needed time to think. Additionally, the offer of guidance answers was viewed as acceptable if students really had no idea how to answer the question; i.e.

examples could be offered for them to think about their PIB. However, if this happened, it was always followed up with additional clarification questions and students were asked to offer explanations of how and why this matched their experience. Consequently, it was important in the main study to allow time for students to answer in a relaxed way. Similarly, after reflecting on the pilot interviews, it was realised that the way in which questions were asked could be more flexible i.e. not feeling the requirement to use the exact language that had been written down. This was dependent on participant needs, as, if a student asked for clarification, the sentence could be asked in a simpler or different way. This was not seen as introducing an element of bias, but rather offering more support for the participant to understand the questions and establishing the interview as relaxed, informal and flexible to student need.

At the end of the interviews students were asked how they found the interview and whether there was anything that could be improved regarding the process/content of the questions. Students generally commented that they were happy with the interview experience. However, one female student commented that she found some of the questions hard to answer and another commented that she felt like she was repeating herself on occasions. On reflection this was put down to her personal circumstances/situation as this was not a problem for most students.

3.3.1.4 Main Study

Below, the explanation and justification for choice of participants, gatekeepers, sampling and research tools used to collect quantitative and qualitative data is given. Firstly, it is important to be reminded of the definition and measures of parental involvement for the study, (as highlighted as important by Fan and Chen (2001)) below:

"Researchers who plan to examine the relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievement should pay special attention to the operational

definition and measurement of parental involvement and should carefully document such definition and measurement" (Fan and Chen, 2001, p17).

Parental involvement in the current study is defined in Chapter One (section 1.5.1) as:

"An exchange between parent/carer and student that has directly influenced the student in regard to their college education".

This includes three types of support:

Three support-types:

1) '**Emotional support'** (showing interest, encouragement, praise, questioning, listening, reassuring, empathising)

2) '**Practical support'** (split further into two parts: a) **Economic Capital** (financial resources which can be used to buy tools which will directly impact the student and their learning on the course e.g. a laptop or specialist equipment) b) **Cultural Capital** (parental/carer knowledge, behaviours, competence, ideas, organisation, sign-posting, skills and dispositions which are communicated to or passed down to students giving them an educational advantage at college)

3) 'Academic Socialisation' support techniques which relate to parental/carer communication of expectations, aspirations and values.

Justification for participant choice

Many studies relating to parental involvement (particularly with younger children) have questioned parents (Lam and Ducreux, 2013; Robinson and Harris, 2014; Noel, Stark and Redford, 2013; Dumont et al, 2014; Blair, 2014 and Fan, Williams and Wolters, 2012). However, parental responses must be reviewed hesitantly as the pressure on parents to appear to take an active interest in their children's education is likely to be high. It is unlikely that a parent would admit to having minimal or no interest in the education of their child.

Research by Gonzales, Cauce and Mason (1996) identified that children who reported on their parental interactions were more reliable in their perceptions than that of their parents. Similarly, when introducing an observer to the research, greater correspondence was found between the child's account and what was observed than the parents' account and what was observed (Sessa et al, 2001). This is important to acknowledge as investigating student perceptions in the current study is integral to understanding how parental behaviours are received, regardless of how they were intended by parents. This justifies the current study's choice to involve students rather than parents. Additionally, the comparative lack of research into students' views is also a useful justification in investigating the student voice. Existing research appears to involve the student voice where students were above the age of 15 years and were seen to be adolescents (Dubose et al, 2014; Robinson and Harris, 2014; Gordon and Cui, 2015; Chen and Ho, 2012 and Ceballo et al, 2012). This aligns with the current study as all students involved were adolescents (in this case 16 or above) and seen as able to give informed consent (i.e. be mature or able enough to understand any implications of being involved in research and making a choice of whether to participate or not).

Additionally, after completing their research, Robinson and Harris (2014) came to the conclusion that many students have never specifically considered the activities their parents engaged in to enhance their academic outcomes and therefore suggested that in future studies careful consideration needs to be given to how students are asked about their PIB and questions that are too open may lead to empty responses (e.g. simplistic and/or ambivalent and/or superficial). Students therefore need to be asked some specific questions about their parental involvement using statements, which clearly reflect visible behaviours; a strategy that has been employed in the current study in the form of PIB statements (see section 3.1.2.1).

All participants who took part in the main study were enrolled on BTEC level 3 courses (these courses are shown in Table 3.4) and were in their second year of study. Participants

were studying a variety of courses. Students in their second year were the focus of the main study because:

a) they were likely to have already established themselves at the college as FE learners and were therefore viewed to be more 'settled' than new first year students for whom college may bring emotional uncertainty and stress due to a change in environment

b) they were more likely to have established 'agreements' with their parents/carers over their FE status in terms of work and study and set expectations for the amount of parental involvement they desired (on both parts) because they had been enrolled and studying at level three for a longer length of time

c) they would receive their overall results for their course within the same year. If participants had included first year students, it would have taken nearly two years to 'match' their responses to their results. Therefore, exploration and analysis of the relationships between PIB and attainment would not have been possible within the time constraints for the project for first year students.

d) their attainment/outcome scores would be in the form of UCAS points which were seen both as comparable across courses both in and out of college and from the perspective of the universities. First year students would not gain outcomes in any comparable form, since different courses complete different units and at different times over the year and some students are able to progress on to their second year without completing a full cohort of units. Calculating points scores for different units would be difficult and might not necessarily relate to common currency, as UCAS points do.

Gatekeepers and sampling

As a member of teaching staff at the college, the researcher contacted a number of gatekeepers (tutors) across all courses by email. The college in which the research was conducted employs 'super tutors'. These tutors have a number of groups of students whom

they meet every week. They offer support, advice, study skills sessions and cater for students' social and emotional well-being at college. Tutors are also aware of any difficult personal issues students may be facing and tend to take on the link between home and college. For many reasons, therefore, it was seen to be the optimum method for gaining access to students' views about parental involvement.

An email was sent to all tutors to ask whether they would be happy to involve their students in the project. It was made clear that students would be fully informed of the research intentions and would have a clearly stated choice in participating. Emails were sent to the tutors spanning 26 different courses. The tutors that agreed to allow the researcher to access their students spanned across 21 courses (see Table 3.4). Tutors for the courses of Motor Vehicle, Catering, Counselling, Electrical Installation and Plumbing and Gas either reported that the students were too busy with UCAS applications/work within tutorials to take part in the study or chose not to respond to the email. Due to the nature of the gate-keeper process, there was nothing else that could have been done to involve students from these courses as it may have been seen to undermine the tutors and may have subsequently had implications for in-college relations.

Research tools and activities

As has been shown in Table 3.4 below, questionnaire data was used to answer all RQs. Focus groups were used to answer RQ1 and RQ4 and interviews were used to answer RQ1, RQ2 and RQ4.

The following section notes the implementation process, data type, purpose and resources in Table 3.4 (see the following page). The research questions are noted for each. Each tool is then justified for use in the current project in relation to literature and the specific questions asked are included.

Table 3.4: Overview of research activities

Research tools Research Questions	Data type and purpose	Sampling	Resources	Implementation	Location of data / findings and *influences for other research tools*
Focus groups **RQ1** **RQ4**	Qualitative data gathered through open questions and props was used to: a) develop content for the questionnaires b) test out students' views re: the PIB statements. Students were asked to choose two PIB statements that they agreed with and to explain why. Additionally, students were asked for their views on how accurate the PIB statements were for measuring PIB. Quantitative data was collected by asking students to review the PIB statements and pick out up to 12 statements that they agreed with. The statement numbers (i.e. 4b, 5c) were noted by the researcher in a notebook.	Tutors were contacted and a 'first response technique' was used. A visiting time/place was agreed for the first five tutors to email back. Five groups of 2nd year students were visited where the research intentions and informed consent were explained. Students were given a week to consider their involvement. Twenty-four participants took part across five courses: Music and Drama, Travel and tourism, Sports, Hairdressing and Public services. Each focus group represented one course.	Verbal questions asked by researcher (typed up on laminated card) Laminated sheets with quotes/images to initiate discussions Sets of laminated statements for each student (cut out) Voice recorder Consent forms Researcher note-book (Appendix I shows these questions and activities)	Average length of activity = 25 minutes. Students were asked open questions to initiate discussions and laminated sheets were used as a focal point to ensure all students had the opportunity to think about and respond to the topic under scrutiny, without forgetting the focus or going off topic. Students were asked to choose up to twelve PIB statements that reflected their experiences at home and explain why. The language used was intentionally informal/colloquial so that all students, regardless of background, ability or literacy skills could access the topic.	Themes gathered are reported in RQ1 and over the course of the project contribute to the development of the ideas and the theory developed in RQ4. These themes relate to responsiveness/ reactiveness of parents/carers in response to grades, parental values for education, parental incompetence in the subject, change in PIB over time and student assertion/ability to control PIB *which influenced questions 6, 9, 10, 11/12 and 13 of the questionnaire, respectively.*

Table 3.4: Overview of research activities

Research tools **Research Questions**	**Data type and purpose**	**Sampling**	**Resources**	**Implementation**	**Location of data / findings and** *influences for other research tools*
Questionnaires **RQ2** **RQ3** **RQ4**	Quantitative data was gathered through the use of Likert scales to establish 'how much' students agreed or disagreed with the PIB statements. Answers to these Likert scale items were analysed against student results (obtained through the college database at the end of the courses) For questions 6, 10 and 12, students were also offered an opportunity to express their thoughts in more detail by writing qualitative responses on the questionnaire using the lines provided.	Tutors were contacted and all groups whose tutors allowed access were visited. During the first visit, the research intentions and informed consent were explained and, as with the focus groups, students were (for the most part) given a week to consider their involvement. In total, 240 students took part across twenty courses: Engineering, construction, health and social care IT, Public services, Sport, Childcare, Business, Outdoor Education, Travel and Tourism, Animation, Textiles, Photography, Fashion, Graphic Design, Fine Art, Acting, Media, Dance and Music.	Questionnaires and consent information (see Appendix J) Spare pens Researcher note-book	Students were asked to answer the questionnaire based on their experiences of parental/carer involvement since they started college. Students were asked to provide details such as their name, gender, age, tutor and ethnicity. Questionnaires took an average of 11 minutes to complete and students were asked to complete them in silence and to leave questions blank if they did not know the answer or felt uncomfortable giving the answer.	Themes gathered from qualitative aspects of the questionnaire findings were coded using NVIVO and are discussed in the analysis process. Students' responses to the Likert scale items were entered into SPSS to be analysed. This data can be found in Chapter Four which is organised by research question. *Responses to question 14 created a focus for the interviews that followed.*

Table 3.4: Overview of research activities

Research tools Research Questions	Data type and purpose	Sampling	Resources	Implementation	Location of data / findings and *influences for other research tools*
Interviews **RQ1** **RQ2** **RQ4**	The purpose of conducting the interviews was to explore student perceptions in more detail than the questionnaire could allow and follow up and clarify understandings of the themes of PIB where applicable. The main focus of the interviews related to identifying PIB differences between students who strongly agreed and strongly disagreed that their PIB directly influenced their attainment (RQ2) but was also used to answer RQ1 and RQ4 where the information contributed to the final model of student experiences. Purely qualitative data was gathered. The decision to choose students who had responded with 'strong' perceptions to this question was taken because it was felt that they may be able to offer	Interview participants were 2nd year students who consented to further involvement by ticking the box on the questionnaire. Students who fell into this category were split into 5 groups relating to their questionnaire responses to qu. 14: The 2 groups of interest were those who chose: "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree". All students in these groups were asked to participate via a written letter (26) with 16 responding and consenting across the following courses: Construction, Travel/ Tourism, Health/Social Care, Information Technology, Business	Interview questions (to be referred to if necessary by researcher) (Appendix K) Student questionnaires (to refer to) Voice recorder Consent forms Researcher note-book	The average length of the interviews was 19 minutes. Interview questions were chosen based on themes gathered from the focus groups and questionnaires. Questions also related to exploring the reasons WHY students had answered question 14 in a particular way and to further question student experiences. The language used in the interviews was intentionally informal/colloquial for a number of reasons: 1) It was likely to make students feel more relaxed 2) It was likely to be understood by all participants, regardless of background, first language or ability.	Interview responses were transcribed and coded using NVIVO and findings were used in thematic analysis.

Table 3.4: Overview of research activities

Research tools **Research Questions**	**Data type and purpose**	**Sampling**	**Resources**	**Implementation**	**Location of data / findings and** *influences for other research tools*
	stronger arguments in regard to their PIB and may be more likely to identify clear reasons for their perceptions than students who responded using the other categories.	Studies and Engineering.			

Focus Groups

Focus groups were employed in this study as they allow the researcher to encourage discussions in order to obtain perceptions (Krueger and Casey, 2000). Particular advantages to focus groups are that more data can be gathered in a shorter space of time than individual interviews. Additionally, differing viewpoints can offer 'critical engagement' (Curtis, Murphy and Shields, 2014, p.125). This is most likely to be effective if the researcher is skilled in making the environment friendly and non-threatening and encouraging/directing the conversation so that all participants feel they have the opportunity to contribute and share their voices (Krueger and Casey, 2000). Additionally, focus groups are able to enhance the quality of data and validate participant experiences (Patton, 2002 and Madriz, 2000). Similar existing studies into parental involvement did not routinely use focus groups (see section 2.3.1) and this may be due to these studies being focused on quantitative data and use of statistical analysis procedures. However, a limitation was that they failed to gain an insight into the quality of the parental involvement interactions, which focus groups in the current study sought to explore. In Robinson and Harris's (2014) study, focus groups were used as a precursor to large scale data collection through which the researchers developed their ideas around 'stage setting' (see Table 3.4). Similarly, the current study used focus groups to test/explore which themes were important in regard to parental involvement to feed into the questionnaire development. However, the focus groups also had two other important aims. Firstly, they asked students to pick out the PIB statements that they felt reflected their experiences to enable the researcher to start to find associations between the behaviours. Each student in turn read out the statement card numbers (which were noted down by the researcher in a notebook) and then explained two in detail. Although this involved some quantitative analysis and this does not reflect the traditional use of a focus group, it was deemed important because the statements acted as a resource which gave students the opportunity to express their perceptions but also revealed patterns in the choices of parental behaviours. Secondly, the students were also asked to comment on whether they felt the

statements reflected their experiences (i.e. were any redundant?) or whether any more statements should be added which contributed to internal validity.

Questions asked in focus groups

Appendix I details the focus group resources and questions and explains the context in which they were asked. The main questions asked were: Can you tell me about whether you think your parents value education at college for you? How do you know this/why do you think this? Can you explain why you have picked out those parenting behaviours? Do you think there are any behaviours that I have missed out? Is there anything your parent does that hasn't been accounted for? What is an 'aspiration'? What do your parents expect you to do with your life? Are you leading your path or are your parents? How will this affect your ability to succeed at college?

Questionnaires

Questionnaires have been widely used by researchers investigating similar areas of parental involvement and attainment as the current study (i.e. Robinson and Harris, 2014; Dumont et al, 2014; Dubose et al, 2014; Blair, 2014; Fan, Williams and Wolters, 2012; Chen and Ho, 2012; Ceballo et al, 2012; Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried and Lam and Ducreux, 2013) and are advantageous in answering the current research questions because they allow both quantitative and qualitative data to be gathered. Additionally, they are suitable for use with large participant groups to enable statistical analysis to be performed (Curtis, Murphy and Shields, 2014; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018; Goddard and Villanova, 2006; Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). They also allow for qualitative data to be collected using participants' own words (Curtis, Murphy and Shields, 2014) alongside the use of closed questions. Questionnaires were used in the current study to identify particular students who felt strongly about the influences or lack of influences for parental involvement on their attainment (question 14) and these students (if open to further involvement) were then approached for an interview. The questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix J.

Likert Scales

The questionnaire quantitative data was collected using responses in the form of 5-point Likert scales. One justification for the use of this technique is that Likert scales are commonly used across other parental involvement research projects and are noted as an effective indicator in relation to participant perception. An additional justification in the use of Likert scales for this project is that it allows the 'collectiveness' of a group to be recognised. This is useful in determining the extent to which DAPSS, PAPSS, PEAV and NEAV identified in a previous smaller project are reflective of student experiences on a larger scale and so allows an opportunity for this theory to be tested. However, it must be noted that despite historical wide use of Likert scales there currently appears to be some concern surrounding the use of analysis procedures regarding data which has been gathered by research tools which use Likert-type scales or similar rating scales due to the validity of the measures (Harpe, 2015; Hartley, 2013; Gosavi, 2015; Lionetti et al, 2016 and Barnette, 2012). Given the concerns highlighted it is necessary to discuss the advantages of using Likert scales, and argue how and why Likert scale use is important in the current study.

A traditional Likert scale attempts to gather information in relation to perceptions or attitudes with an odd number of categories (most commonly five) where the middle category is usually neutral and should be collected and analysed as a set of items that relate to one another (Barnette, 2012). In the first paper written by Likert, he suggested that ideally the scales must be used for an entire set of items (Harpe, 2015). Likert posited that the set of items (which are likely to be declarative statements about non-physical phenomena that respondents react to) should be either summed (i.e. added together) or analysed to determine the arithmetic mean (i.e. average). The idea was that underlying phenomenon can be measured by aggregation of data providing the attitudes and perceptions being researched related to each other and so can be called a 'set of items' (Harpe, 2015, p.839). Here, the issue for researchers is whether the items involved in a project can be viewed as a set. Arguably the extent to which certain items relate to each other is likely to be perceived

as a result of the researcher's existing knowledge of the social phenomena. Indeed, presenting items as a set appears to reflect a post-positivist approach where the researcher not only introduces the items (the language used, the phrasing and content) but also predicts links between the statements before the analysis has been completed.

'Categorical Factor Analysis' (CFA) was implemented using a statistical analysis program called SPSS (Field, 2013) which identifies how various items group together to form factors and can therefore confirm which items appear to belong to a 'set' or not. In this way, the use of Likert scale items and responses can be used when a set is predicted and can reveal the factors that are reflected during the analysis stage. Even if the researcher has predicted an 'incorrect' set of items or identifies items which may need to be adapted or deleted, this can be identified post-data collection and the results from this can be useful in themselves (i.e. identifying potential styles/categories of parenting through the groupings of different behaviours).

Another consideration when analysing rating scale data is considering the extent to which perceptions are categorical. As an example, if a student said they 'disagreed' that their parent trusted them to do college work themselves, the researcher must consider the extent to which they place themselves in this category in relation to the other categories (i.e. are they firmly rooted in the middle of this category, are they closer to 'strongly disagree' or are they nearer to 'neither agree nor disagree'?) The quantification of such feeling can therefore be seen to be an approximation rather than an exact truth when using categories within Likert scale ratings. Additionally, it can also be assumed by the researcher that the respondents will interpret the numbers in the Likert scale in the same way, but this may not be the case, as noted by Hartley (2013). Another problem that has been identified with Likert scale use is the problem of 'end-aversion' bias (where participants are less likely to choose the extreme ends of the scale) as noted by Curtis, Murphy and Shields (2014) meaning that extreme views which were not highlighted by the Likert scale may go under-reported. These Likert scale critiques are important to consider for the current project. However, as student

perceptions are being explored by more than Likert scale data alone, the disadvantages become less of an issue in terms of making conclusions in overall project findings since triangulation allows for convergence of information through a number of research tools and so potential influences such as end-aversion bias become less problematic. Indeed, Curtis, Murphy and Shields (2014) recommend using questionnaire data to complement other research tools, as one drawback is gaining a limited amount of information using one tool.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, the use of categorisation of perceptions using Likert scales has long been used as an acceptable method of data collection (Harpe, 2015), and considering the need to use Likert scales for the principal component analysis procedure (referred to above), Likert scales are justified as useful in developing understanding regarding student perceptions of PIB for students post-16. The full questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix J.

Questions asked in the questionnaire

Table 3.5 on the following page displays a breakdown of the questions. Likert scales were predominantly used to answer questions that would produce quantitative data where associations with UCAS points could be investigated. Other questions included tick boxes and lines to write responses. Different question types were used to ensure that the questionnaire had variety and that its completion was not a monotonous process.

In relation to RQ2, note that students in the current study were not asked to specifically comment on their perceptions of their parents'/carers' academic competence. However, question ten of the questionnaire asked for student perceptions regarding whether parents/carers found it hard to support students due to the course/subject matter, and the focus groups and interviews gleaned information about student perceptions of parental/carer competence and the confidence they had in supporting learning within the home through use of other questions about PIB.

Table 3.5: Breakdown of questions used in questionnaire

Question number	Data Type	Explanation
1 & 2	Quantitative	These served as warm up questions and were not included in the data set. They questioned how frequently parents/carers asked students about their college work and in what kinds of tasks their parents had been involved in.
3	Quantitative	This relates to parental/carer jobs, their highest level of education and their salary. This was included due to the literature surrounding parental involvement and socio-economic status, which links to social capital and is not linked to perceptions, but to facts (if known).
4,5,7,8	Quantitative	These questions all relate to perceptions in relation to PIB where students are presented with all the PIB statements. The PIB statements were completely mixed up so that students had to read and answer each one individually so that they did not reflect the original DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV categories. This was seen to be more likely to result in valid responses where each statement was considered separately and was not seen to belong to a larger group.
6	Qualitative	This question is split into a, b and c and is concerned with parent/carer responsiveness/reactiveness in regard to formative grades. It gives students three statements and asks them to agree or disagree and to then elaborate and explain their answer.
9	Quantitative	This relates to the perceived values that parents place on education at college by use of a Likert scale
10	Qualitative	A statement is given and students are asked to comment. It relates to the association between parent/carer support and the course that the student is undertaking at college

Table 3.5: Breakdown of questions used in questionnaire

Question number	Data Type	Explanation
11	Quantitative	Tick boxes are provided for students who must indicate one statement which is reflective of their experience. The focus of this question relates to whether students feel their parents have reduced, increased or offered the same amount of involvement in education since enrolment at college.
12	Qualitative	This question asks students to comment on whether their parents/carers involvement has changed since primary school
13	Quantitative	This relates to student assertiveness and asks students how often they feel that they control the amount (a) and type (b) of involvement their parents/carers have with college work
14	Quantitative	This question asks students to consider the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement, “having my parents/carers more involved with my college work would make me attain a higher grade”.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were useful in the current study because the researcher has predefined areas for discussion (as recognised by Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). This reflects the post-positivist stance in the current study where the researcher has some control over the topics of conversation, and although questions can be changed, the topics were already decided, based on feedback and findings from the focus groups and questionnaire data. Indeed, the questionnaire data had allowed interviewees to be sampled based on their answers to question 14 and so the questions in the interview had to be directed in this knowledge. Interviews allow the researcher to gain a more detailed insight into meaning and

significance of perceptions and use of recording devices is useful in transcribing detailed conversations (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). Additionally, they are useful in encouraging free expression in a way that is limited in a questionnaire context (Goddard and Villanova, 2006) which demonstrates the advantages of a holistic mixed-methods approach. The use of a mixed-methods approach within the post-positivist framework meant that although interview questions were semi-structured and researcher led, there was an element of free expression by participants which adds value and weight to the findings through triangulation both within and between data sets, which is a feature of post-positivism.

Interview Questions

Interview question one asked students to confirm the answer given on question 14 of the questionnaire to ensure that their strong view was still evident. All students confirmed their previous response. Question two asked students to describe their relationship with their parents/carers based on the support they provide with college. Questions 3-12 were split between students who strongly agree and strongly disagree so that the questions are clearly directed at gathering perceptions from opposing sides of the argument as can be seen in Table 3.6 on the following page.

Table 3.6: Split Interview Questions

Agree/strongly agree	Disagree/ strongly disagree
3) Why do you think **more** involvement would make you achieve higher grades? 4) Do you wish your parents/carers were **MORE** involved than they are already? 5) What do you think the 3 **most important** things are that your parent/carer can do to **support** you to get high grades? 6) Do your parents/carers view you **as independent** with your learning? 7) Tell me about the **support** they already give you 8) What would you **change** about their support? 9) Do you think that your attitudes to your college education influences your parents' involvement?	3) Why do you **disagree** with this statement? 4) Tell me about the ways your parents/carers **support** you with college 5) Refer to qu. 12 Would YOU want your parents to be more involved? 6) Would your parents **want** to be more involved or not? Why? 7) What **factors** (things about your life/situation) have made you develop your independence? 8) Do YOU control the support you get or do your PARENTS control how much/what types they are willing to give? 9) My parents **have taught** me the skills to help me to **be independent**" *Please comment.*

The final question was asked to both groups and requested students to reflect on the one thing they think parents could do that would best support them to get high grades at college.

See Appendix K for the full set of final interview questions. Student sensitivity to the topic and arrangements made for students who became uncomfortable during the interview process is discussed in section 3.3.2.3.

Triangulation, validity and reliability

Data was triangulated in a number of ways for the current project. Triangulation is seen as a form of validation as it increases the degree of convergence of data (as noted by

Palaiologou, Needham and Male, (2016)) to create a holistic view of parental involvement and is a process which is often utilised in post-positivist studies. Validity involves assessing whether the choices made in the project in regard to the design of research instruments allow the researcher to measure that which was intended (i.e. whether the tools are able to effectively answer the research questions) (Kumar, 2014 and Palaiologou, Needham and Male, 2016). Specifically, Cronbach (1971) suggests that information quality is enhanced by construct validity where the measures used must represent the theoretical constructs which allows the research to form judgements (Cronbach, 1971). The PIB statements used in the current study were partly formulated based on understanding of parental involvement/parenting styles literature and as well as previous work by the researcher in this area. This is further explored by Ho and Adams, (2016) who note that operational definitions must 'capture the true meaning of the constructs' (i.e. be a valid measure) (Ho and Adams, 2016, p. 28). The definition for parental involvement in the current study is in section 1.5.1 and the PIB statements and their construction are explained and justified in section 3.1.2.1. The constructs in the current project centre on the PIB statements which were explored in the focus groups. In both the pilot and main focus groups, students were asked whether they felt that the statements were reflective of their experiences or whether any needed to be added to or altered. Additionally, students were asked to comment on the statements in relation to their own experiences. This relates to construct validity (Cronbach, 1971) because the focus groups tested whether the statements were reflective of PIB and were useful in the context that they were being used. The pilot studies for the questionnaires and the interviews also tested whether the tools were appropriate, which was a form of validation and has been discussed in the pilot study where changes were made (see section 3.3.1.3).

As has been highlighted by May (2011) the pilot process is also useful in terms of reliability, since in the current project similar data was gathered for both studies. Reliability relates to consistency of measures and findings (i.e. could it be replicated and would research instruments yield the same data on different occasions?) (Hoy and Adams, 2016; Kumar,

2014; Thomas, 2013; Robson, 2011). This can be seen in the current project through triangulation where responses were repeated by participants at various stages of the project. As an example, the interview participants' questionnaires (and, where applicable, focus group contributions) were checked to make sure that students were reporting their experiences in a similar way across research tools. Thomas (2013) suggests that triangulation occurs when there is more than one kind of evidence which can be corroborated with another. He states, 'the more evidence there is – each piece corroborating with another – the surer you will be" (Thomas, 2013, p.23). This again reflects the choices made for the current project in respect of post-positivism and the use of mixed methods. However, he also maintains that social research will never have conclusive evidence. In other words, it is important to note the difference between using evidence to create or propose a theory for further testing (as the current project has done) and finding 'the truth' (which is effectively impossible when identifying individuals' perceptions). Indeed, post-positivism highlights the need to appreciate critical realism which suggests that reality can be approximated through perceptions but never fully understood. However, triangulation allows for ideas to be shaped, matched and refined according to the findings gathered in different ways. Lichtman (2013) too claims that triangulation allows a picture of greater accuracy to be formed and reduces potential bias. It could be argued that having an insider researcher role and the data collection approach adopted (i.e. tightly directing and controlling the data collection) biased the data collection and subsequent analysis. However, this was not the case. A post-positivist approach allowed for the researcher to create opportunities for student participation and responses as explained in section 3.2.3.

The process of triangulation was completed not only on separate participant responses (see point a and b, below) but also across analysed quantitative data and qualitative findings (see point c, below).

The benefits of triangulation techniques were that:

a) Responses gained by students using the *same* data set could be explored and checked for coherence ('Internal Triangulation' – Atkins and Wallace, 2012)
b) Responses could be checked for reliability where information was collected by *different* data sets (across a period of eight months). Thomas (2013, p.146) specifically refers to this use of triangulation as 'methodological triangulation'.
c) After the process of analysis had taken place, overall quantitative data and qualitative findings could be explored in relation to each other (see Chapter Five).

A: Triangulation (within one data set) using the 'reliability via row' technique

Where student perceptions were gathered for each research tool, the researcher checked whether the same students were offering similar perceptions through their responses. This was completed for the qualitative findings by using Microsoft Word to type up all the responses in a row next to the pseudonym created for each student. The researcher was then able to look along the row and confirm that the responses were echoing the same ideas. For clarity, the researcher called this 'reliability via row'. Although different themes emerged, students were all seen to reflect similar ideas of PIB. Likewise, for the 240 questionnaire responses, triangulation techniques were used to match up the quantitative responses (i.e. Likert scale answers) to the qualitative data (written information) using the same 'reliability via row' technique. Again, there was no disparity between responses. The only disadvantages of this checking procedure were that

a) This process was very time consuming (but necessary)
b) Some student qualitative responses for the questionnaire were quite succinct and so students who offered perceptions through this tool alone could not be checked in detail if the qualitative data provided was minimal.

Although (b) was deemed a problem for some, approximately 65 percent of respondents were able to provide more detailed answers which filled the spaces provided on the questionnaire.

B: Triangulation (across data sets)

Data was checked across tools using the 'reliability via row' process described above where focus group and questionnaire participants' responses were brought together in one document. Some participants took part in the focus groups and then in the questionnaires; whereas others participated in the questionnaires and then were asked to be interviewed. Interview transcripts were read and compared with the questionnaire responses. No students took part via all three research tools. Again, this process confirmed that students were reliable in their communication of their perceptions of PIB, since the PIB discussed matched up across research tools. Although the tools allowed more or less elaboration on the issues surrounding PIB, there was coherence between student attitudes across tools.

C: Triangulation (across quantitative data and qualitative findings)

Chapter Five draws together the similarities between quantitative data and qualitative findings after the process of analysis had taken place. This ensured that theory devised in the qualitative analysis process had been compared and contrasted to the quantitative data in order to understand PIB in a holistic way to answer RQ4. This is a strength of using a mixed-methods approach and is explained in Chapter Five.

3.3.2 Ethics

A detailed, systematic process was adopted to ensure that participants came to no harm during data collection, despite the potentially sensitive topic under scrutiny. Informed consent, safeguarding, contact details for the researcher, rights to withdraw, anonymity and confidentiality were also explored and explained in the context of the study. As is highlighted below, the key principle of 'respect' has underpinned all decisions made in regard to research arrangements for the current project, as recommended by Curtis, Murphy and Shields, (2014).

3.3.2.1 Informed consent

Focus groups and questionnaires

The first tutor who was contacted to secure student participation suggested that it might be a good idea to offer students a week to consider their involvement for the focus groups and questionnaires. She suggested that the research should be explained one week, students should be asked to use the week ahead to consider whether they would like to participate and then return the following week to conduct the research. Although this technique was not initially considered, it was deemed polite to accept this way of working. However, on reflection, this method served to enhance the data collection in a number of ways:

1) In giving students a week to consider their involvement, they could also begin to reflect on their parental involvement so that they were not put on the spot at the time of the participation

2) It gave the tutor a chance to plan alternative activities for the students who did not want to take part and so made everyone feel involved in some way

3) It gave the researcher a chance to book additional rooms if required (depending on the size of the groups)

4) In giving students a week to consider their involvement, it did not force them to quickly consent to their involvement without having sufficient time and hence allowed the process to be an act of thought and consideration, rather than impulse.

Although the benefits of this technique have been recognised, it was not feasible in all cases as the researcher had to be flexible to the needs of the group and the tutors, who often had other things booked in and who requested that the project was both explained and completed within one session. This happened on four occasions during questionnaire completion only. The uptake rate and response types between those students who were

given a week and those who were not given a week was not seen to be affected for those involved.

After explaining the research focus and returning to the groups the following week, the nature of the study was explained again, to remind students who attended the previous week and to communicate to those who may have been absent the previous week. The importance of informed consent was explained, indicating that students would not be disadvantaged by not taking part. This needed to be communicated clearly because students may have assumed that the researcher carries authority and therefore participation was expected. For the purposes of practicality, students were asked to raise their hand if they wished to take part.

For both questionnaires and focus groups, all participants were asked to sign consent forms which gave them written information about the project, indicated that they could withdraw from the study at any time and offered the researcher's email address as a contact method (which was also written up on the whiteboard). Students were also told that if they lost or forgot the contact details and wanted to get in touch about the research or their involvement, their tutor would be happy to pass on details on request. Students were also given the option to request a copy of the project by ticking a box and providing their personal email address, as is recommended practice in the BERA (2018) ethical guidelines.

Interviews

For the interviews, students were sent a letter about further involvement in the study. The nature of the interview was described including how long it would take and the benefits of taking part. Students were also informed that they would not be disadvantaged in any way if they did not wish to take part. Students were given the choice of replying using the researcher's work email address or telling their tutor that they wished to take part. Students were given a choice about when and where they wished to be interviewed and were asked to again consent to their involvement by signing a form (see appendix B). Most students

opted to be met at their tutorial session and be taken out to another room for interview; hence involving the tutor in communication was a useful strategy. A small tutorial room situated in the library was used to meet with these students.

3.3.2.2 Equality and accessibility

When completing all activities, the researcher was aware that the needs of those participants who had English as an additional language or disability should be catered for. As the researcher did not know any students before meeting them, conversations were had about 'participant access' with the personal tutors. Although very few were identified as having limited English, these particular students chose not to take part in the study and so this aspect became irrelevant. Two disabled students took part (one in a focus group and one in a questionnaire) and their individual needs were considered as they would be in any taught college session (i.e. the table height, whether they could see the white board, whether they could access writing materials independently, whether they were able to comfortably make eye contact with other members of the group). No problems were reported in relation to this.

3.3.2.3 Topic sensitivity arrangements

Ethical approval was attained in relation to this research by the University of Bedfordshire research ethics committee on 13/10/2015 (see appendix A). The topic of parental involvement can be viewed as quite sensitive in nature, especially for adolescent students. Students between the ages of 16-18 were likely to be at a vulnerable stage in their development as they are within the 'identity versus role confusion' stage (ages 12-18) described by Erikson (1995). Within this stage, Erikson (1995) noted that students are likely to resist parental expectations, and, in searching for 'identity' are likely to experiment with new ideas and concepts which could be viewed as 'rebelling' against people who care for them. Therefore, for some students, this topic may have made them feel uncomfortable or upset. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) discuss the importance of rigorous attempts to protect participants from harm no greater than they may experience in day to day life. Called

‘non-maleficence’, they suggest that a researcher must guarantee that participants will not be harmed during the data collection process. Therefore, the language used in all research tools related to parents OR carers which sought to include students who, for a variety of reasons, may not reside with their parents.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) discuss the problem of threatening or sensitive questions and suggest that, as well as causing some upset, they are likely to cause respondents to either over or under-report their feelings. This risk was minimised as care was taken to phrase the questions in a way that did not undermine behaviours whilst providing a clear description of behaviours and attitudes which reflects a particular parenting/carer style. Questions were written as simply as possible to avoid students misunderstanding or having the embarrassment of asking for help so that students could maintain their dignity. Students were asked to complete questionnaires without discussing their answers with other students both to ensure valid answers were given and so that students did not feel uncomfortable learning about others’ parental/carer relationships and comparing them to their own relationships (particularly if they felt they had negative associations with parents/carers). However, in the case of the focus groups, students did hear about others’ parent/carer relationships and this needed to be carefully managed. The researcher explained the support mechanisms that had been put in place at the outset and gave students a choice in the way they wanted to respond, should they have found themselves upset or emotional. There were a number of safety nets employed to ensure that students’ sensitivities were protected and minimised wherever possible:

1) Students were told about the research aims and about the kinds of PIB they would be asked about as transparently as possible and were given a clear choice in participating or not. This information was given to students a week in advance where possible and was again repeated on the week of completion to ensure that any absentees from the previous week were fully informed of the nature of the research. Students were told about the

process, why their participation was needed, how it would be used and how and to whom it will be reported (as indicated as important by BERA, 2018).

2) Students who chose to abstain were not treated any less favourably than other students and had a choice (led by their tutor) about what activities they would like to engage in instead. Tutors commented that no students reacted negatively to this, as they expected to engage in tutorial tasks at that point in time. Students were seen to be of an age where they had the mental capacity to fully understand the decisions they were making with respect to participating. Indeed, BERA (2018) note that mature children are capable of forming their own views and should have the right to freely express their views.

3) Students who agreed to take part in the research were reminded that the activity would probe them to think deeply about the behaviours their parents/carers exhibit in relation to college work and that if, at any point, they felt emotional or uneasy, they could:

a) Stop completing the activity (regardless of the progress made) and sit quietly if they wished (for questionnaires and focus groups).

b) Stop completing the activity and signal to their tutor or the researcher that they wished to step outside. If this was the case, the tutor or the researcher would follow them and offer any appropriate support.

c) Complete the activity and come and speak to either the researcher or their tutor afterwards to express their thoughts and feelings.

d) Withdraw their response from the study, even if it has been fully completed and at any point up to publication. To make this process easier for focus group participants, responses were transcribed on the same day (where possible) and each student was given an identity code so that the researcher was able to remember who had said what and could therefore withdraw their data if necessary.

e) Email the researcher to discuss their concerns after the activity was completed (bearing in mind that the email address given to participants may become inactive if the researcher ever left the college).

f) Indicate that they did not feel comfortable and the activity could be brought to a close. Students were given the right to withdraw with or without reason as stated in BERA (2018). However, if students wanted to discuss their reasons for feeling uneasy, the researcher would be interested to know whether anything specific that had been said had made them feel awkward so that research procedures could be adapted. Students then had the option to:

i) carry on with the activity

ii) leave the activity

iii) leave the activity room for a short time to reflect/have a drink/have some space and then return (in which case the researcher would let the tutor know about their whereabouts)

iv) request to speak to their tutor one-to-one.

If students communicated that they were significantly distressed, they would be signposted to speak to their tutor or a member of staff in the Student Services department who offer a range of support including counselling sessions. The researcher had a duty of care to ensure that if students were distressed, they had the support available to care for their emotional needs.

The wide range of options as described above was necessary to ensure that students were protected from harm during the research process and at every stage (and with every research tool) there were support frameworks in place which had been considered in detail. No participants withdrew their involvement or communicated obvious distress in any of the research activities.

BERA (2018) also recommends offering students choice in whether they wish to be accompanied for interviews, particularly those who may be part of a marginalised group. However, it was difficult to gauge whether students would fit into this category or not and so all students were given this choice. All interviewee participants chose to take part independently.

3.3.2.4 Safeguarding

Safeguarding and student well-being were considered carefully. If students were to disclose an inappropriate incident to the researcher at any point during the research process and it was felt that this information needed to be passed on to the students' tutor, the students were made aware that this information would not be kept confidential due to the risk involved to the student. College safeguarding procedures have been developed in line with government safeguarding legislation and advice including the "Protection of children and vulnerable adults in FE colleges" document (ATL, 2009) and 'Best practice in safeguarding in college' document (Ofsted, 2011). These procedures designed to protect children (of all ages) need to ensure that many different agencies work together to protect children from harm and the researcher had a duty of care to report any abuse claims or similar to the safeguarding lead. Choosing not to report such occurrences would fail to protect students from harm and would also jeopardise the researcher's role as a staff member at the college. BERA (2018) state that making any decision to override agreements concerning confidentiality and anonymity must be thoroughly deliberated and should be written down clearly and in detail as to the choices made to override these important practices. Each consent form stated that the information would be confidential unless a safeguarding issue was raised. As it happened no students disclosed information that needed to be passed on, but this was an important consideration.

Two of the interviews in particular demonstrated that, although students may have underlying sensitivities to concepts of parental involvement, they sometimes have a desire to share their experiences without necessarily showing obvious distress. On one occasion it

was felt that a student did wish to share some emotional trauma and, although it was difficult to comment on, the researcher listened intently and used eye contact and body language to affirm support for the student. The incident she recalled had happened in the past and was not considered to be a current safeguarding issue at the time of data collection. The student was formerly a 'looked-after child' (i.e. in local authority care) and was accessing the help that she needed. Part of this student's sensitive experience was related to cultural differences and the impact it had on the development of her independence, both in relation to studying at college and in many other aspects. BERA (2018) discuss the need to be aware of sensitive situations where cultural differences may impact on educational experiences. However, the very nature of cultural differences means that researchers (depending on their own cultural background) may be unaware of the sensitivities that may occur within different cultures and in different families. The informed-consent and 'right to withdraw' procedure as described above was seen as robust enough to protect students for whom cultural differences and sensitivities were experienced as a problem.

3.3.2.5 Confidentiality and anonymity

A researcher must guarantee confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability of the research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Confidentiality was very important as students were required to supply their student number, course, level, gender and ethnicity to be used for the purposes of the research. Although full names were written on the questionnaires so that interviewees could be identified, participants were given a pseudonym when data was written up so that responses could be matched to their subsequent results, but so that they were not traceable when the research was reported.

Completed questionnaires/interview transcripts and focus group responses were stored in a locked filing cabinet within the university post-graduate research office. This room could only be accessed by a limited number of research students. A card-operated door entry system is used to ensure access is only available to selected research students. The filing cabinet key is kept by the researcher and is not labelled. Electronically stored data were within password

protected files. After the thesis and VIVA have been completed, hard copies of student data will be shredded to ensure they are disposed of safely and participants' information remains confidential.

3.3.3 Data analysis

In terms of data analysis, statistical measures have been used with qualitative data where researchers adopted a post-positivist approach (Henderson, 2011) as has been used in the current study. However, it is uncommon for post-positivists to use complex statistical measures traditionally used by purely quantitative researchers. Post-positivists are more likely to use exploratory statistical procedures such as Categorical Factor Analysis (CFA) as an analysis tool to highlight underlying factors as it seeks to discover and/or verify a theory (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). CFA has been adopted in the current study which is reflective of the post-positivist approach adopted. Further, instead of arguing that the post-positivist model could relate to and embed specific aspects of positivism/interpretivism, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) view post-positivism as a completely separate paradigm in which data can be analysed in a number of ways so long as the research questions are honoured. This view is also adopted in the current study, since each research question is answered by a different analysis procedure. Specifically, in research question four, an analysis method called 'Multinominal Logistic Regression' was used and, although usually associated with purely positivist approaches, it provided an appropriate answer to the research questions.

In the section below, each research question is taken in turn with an explanation for the data analysis procedure used. For clarity, please see Table 3.1: Overall Project Design and Navigation.

Once focus group information had been gathered from students, it was entered into Excel and students were given a pseudonym (which could only be recognised by the researcher) so that subsequent student responses (from the questionnaires and interviews) and a final UCAS score could be added to the correct row (each of which represented a participant).

3.3.3.1 Pilot Study

For the most part, analysis procedures were similar to those used for the main study and indeed, as they preceded the main study, were used to test the analysis techniques and

allowed the researcher to practice and reflect on the optimum ways in which to understand the information.

3.3.3.2 Main study

Table 3.7 below provides an overview of the analysis procedures for each part of the project, based on research question. The following sections explain these analysis procedures in greater detail.

Table 3.7 Analysis Tests

Research Question	SPSS test/tools used	Justification
RQ1	Student responses were thematically analysed in NVIVO and structured into hierarchies to demonstrate the relationships between themes	Important themes needed to be organised so that they could be examined and compared/contrasted to college guidance, Ofsted requirements and policy-maker perceptions
RQ2 Qualitative data	Student responses were thematically analysed in NVIVO and then inserted into Table 4.9 to look for associations between themes and outcomes	Table 4.9 offered a visual analysis for themes and outcomes for students
RQ2 Quantitative data (preliminary tests)	Cross tabulations	These were completed as preliminary tests to underpin RQ2

RQ2 Normal distribution tests	Shapiro-Wilk, Skewness Kurtosis, Histograms Q-Q plots	These were completed to underpin RQ2 to establish the use of parametric or non-parametric tests
RQ2	Kruskal-Wallis (for more than two factors) Mann-Whitney (for two factors only)	These tests were used because the data required non-parametric tests
RQ3	Pearson Chi squared test used to compare column proportions	This was used as a test of significance across different factors: age, ethnicity, gender and course
RQ4	Cronbach Alpha Test	Used as a reliability test to confirm internal consistency
RQ4	Categorical Factor Analysis (CFA)	Was used to explore which behaviours loaded onto the same factors (i.e. created 'groups' of behaviours)
RQ4	Multinominal Logistic Regression	Due to UCAS data being ordinal, this test was used to determine whether the groups of behaviours associated with UCAS scores

RQ4	Themes included in the hierarchies (Figures 4.2 and 4,3 as well as in table 4.2) were analysed alongside individual student responses which had been organised into rows in excel. This created a qualitative model of student experiences	Qualitative data was used to produce models of student experiences which answers this research question

Research Question One

Research Question one asked: “which aspects of Parental Involvement Behaviours (PIB) are reported to be important and/or problematic for students in relation to their attainment at college and are these views similar to or different from college guidance, Ofsted requirements and policy-maker perception?”. It was answered by gathering qualitative information which related to important and recurring themes for students when discussing their PIB and established whether these themes were dissimilar or in agreement with college guidance (in terms of the college prospectus), Ofsted requirements (through documentation which reflects requirements for FE in relation to PIB) and policy-maker perception (achieved through an interview with the Director of Quality and Standards (DQS). The thematic analysis technique used in this project is reflective of the work by Bazeley (2016) in which themes are described, compared and related and this technique is used across all research questions, where appropriate. Bazeley’s (2016) ideas were seen as important to adopt for the current study because she discusses the use of optimum methods for drawing out meaning from qualitative data. Although many scholars (Lichtman, 2013; Walliman, 2016; Kumar, 2014; Thomas, 2013 and Atkins and Wallace, 2012) have detailed appropriate ways

of exploring and attempting to understand data by labelling data with codes, creating hierarchies of codes and finding themes, Bazeley (2016) criticises the reliance on key themes alone to support understanding of participant perceptions and discusses the importance of the awareness of dimensions and integration in the data, stating that data must be “challenged, extended, supported and linked to their full value” (Bazeley, 2016, p.8). Use of a robust process to organise findings is fundamental in attempting to effectively understand and communicate the data. Systematic procedures such as that used by Bazeley (2016) were identified by Lichtman (2013) who claimed that a general lack of standardisation in qualitative data analysis was problematic and so identifying and following a defined structure was important. The requirement for a rigorous, defined structure for qualitative analysis initiated the development of the hierarchies used in the current study which attempts to explain student experiences by exploring and highlighting patterns.

Creating pre-themes based on prior knowledge was supported by Bazeley (2016). However, she was clear in identifying the importance of researcher flexibility in responding to finer nuances, should they present themselves. Using theory or prior experiences in order to guide the initial coding process was also recommended by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) who discussed different approaches to analysis techniques. However, they also understood the benefits of deriving the codes from the text (conventional content analysis) and identified the advantages of using both techniques. This idea was reflected in the current project. Initially a brainstorm was conducted independently by the researcher to identify nodes and themes that might be useful to the study and these were added to NVIVO at the outset, before analysis took place. This is reflective of the knowledge creator stance which is aligned with post-positivism and so is seen as appropriate in the current study. The nodes were created as a result of:

- Nodes or themes recognised in the pilot study
- Knowledge gathered through experiences working in an FE institution
- Experience of gathering the information (memories of student responses)

- Ideas gathered from the literature review.

The creation of pre-themes allowed for an initial simple coding process which was built upon by an exploration of additional key themes (as has been identified by many of the scholars listed above). Next, Bazeley's (2016) idea of linking, supporting and extending the data as associations are explored within and between themes and these ideas are interpreted visually to create representations of student experiences through interrogating the data. To complete this analysis effectively, Bazeley (2016) recommends the 'describe, compare and relate' technique outlined below:

- Describe: codes and characteristics should be described to realise common codes/themes.
- Compare: the codes/themes should be compared for different groups of participants (i.e. analysed across research tools) to determine how they have been expressed in different contexts (triangulation).
- Relate: Themes should be related to each other, asking questions like 'Which themes link with others and how do they link'? Is there a pattern emerging?

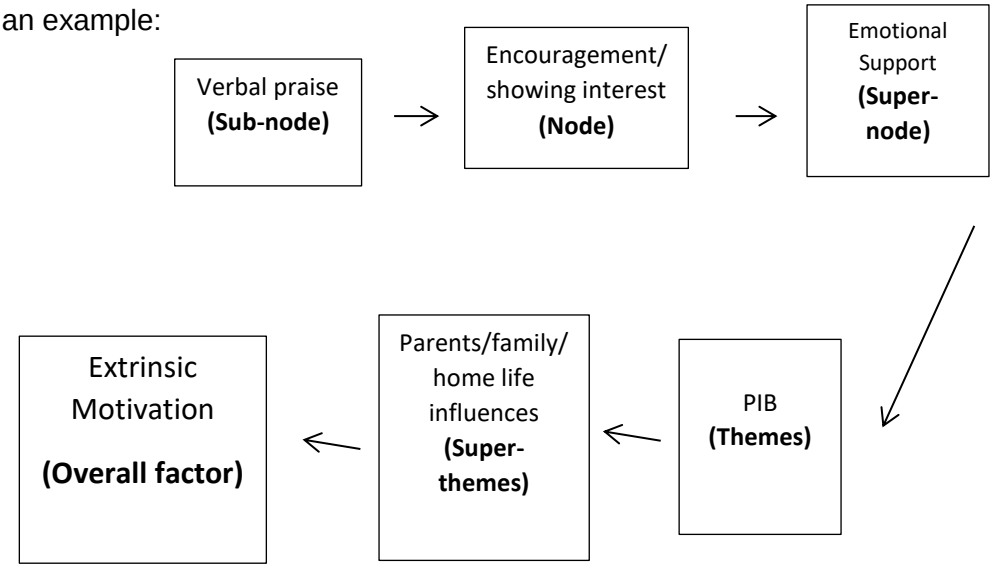
The qualitative responses (from focus groups, written questionnaire comments and interviews) were gathered and entered into the qualitative software programme 'NVIVO'. NVIVO was used as a means to firstly organise the enormous amount of material that was generated. This was necessary, as completing it by hand would have been an unmanageable task, given the amount of qualitative information generated from each of the three research tools. Organising the information required the creation of nodes which are categories where similar student experiences can be grouped together. As an example, if ten students discussed their drive to gain the highest grades possible these would be coded using the same node. Manageability of data was an important consideration, since initially 79 nodes were produced altogether. This mass of nodes was potentially unwieldy and so ways in which to manage the data were an important consideration, both in terms of analysis and ability to report the data coherently. Therefore, another main advantage of using NVIVO was

that it allowed information to be grouped into different layers, creating a hierarchical approach. The use of a hierarchy was necessary as it created a clear and transparent format through which to communicate the complex structures which underpinned a huge number of different student experiences. Two hierarchies became apparent from analysing the data into layers (see below):

1) The Hierarchy of Extrinsic Motivation
2) The Hierarchy of Intrinsic Motivation

An example of the different layers in the 'Hierarchy of extrinsic motivation' is displayed below. Sub-nodes relate to the smallest details mentioned by participants (e.g. 'verbal praise' which would be represented by a sub-node). Once sub-nodes had been created and 'snippets' of student experience entered in, these could be moved to allow them to group together with other common ideas to create nodes (e.g. encouragement/showing interest). Nodes would then be grouped into Super-nodes (e.g. emotional support). These Super-nodes could then be grouped further to create Themes (e.g. PIB). Themes could further be grouped under Super-themes (e.g. Parents/family/home life influences). Super-themes could then be underpinned by overall factors (e.g. Extrinsic motivation). This hierarchical structure was effective because it allowed many links to be realised and identified some important overall findings (e.g. the important underlying factor of extrinsic/intrinsic motivation). Both hierarchies can be seen in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 with a key (Figure 4.1) to highlight the different 'levels' of responses.

As an example:



In addition to this new sub-nodes/nodes/super-nodes/themes/super-themes were then created (through interpretation) in response to the data which saw the structure of the hierarchy change considerably in line with student responses. Indeed, at the outset, it was difficult to determine whether aspects of student experience should be added as 'nodes' or 'themes', and these were often changed and adapted throughout the analysis process to provide a 'best fit' for student experiences, resulting in (at some stages) a six or seven-level hierarchy. Lichtman (2013) too highlights that organising information by codes is an on-going process where codes may be initially created, modified, organised and again modified in response to participant experiences, as was completed in the current project.

After the hierarchies were created, the themes were mind-mapped by hand in more detail so that the most common themes were investigated in more depth. The purpose of this was to find agreements and disagreements between student responses and college/Ofsted/policy-maker views. Analysing the themes in detail resulted in the formation of Table 4.2 which compared themes across research tools.

The process used to interrogate the themes for RQ1 is outlined below:

a) Consideration of the associations/links between themes in Table 4.2 where themes were colour coded

b) Exploring how these associations/links present themselves and the reasons behind this (i.e. students saw themselves as independent for different reasons: independent living, their own assertion, parental absent interest, parental age/stage related expectations)
c) Hand-written brainstorms of thoughts gathered through engaging with the raw data in NVIVO
d) Identification of the overarching/common themes (i.e. recognising themes that were most frequently presented)
e) Identification of the most important key themes as identified by students through their choice of language or tone of voice used to convey their perception, which was noted down in a log book throughout the process when required.

Research Question Two:

Research Question TWO asked "Does student attainment associate with either: a) student perceptions of PIB or b) student age, gender, ethnicity, cultural capital influences or course?" This question was answered using both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was gathered through the questionnaires and the qualitative data was gathered through the interview process.

Qualitative interview data

The interview findings were analysed in two ways. Firstly, the themes were coded with the other qualitative findings in the analysis process set out in RQ1. However, additionally (and for RQ2 specifically), the interview data were used to create a typology table using Microsoft Word. Table 4.9 was created to show how responses differed for students in relation to their want of parental involvement, how they felt about their PIB and its association with grades and the grades students attained. These categories were based on themes that were presented in the findings in RQ1.

Table 4.9 sought to offer opportunities to highlight any associations between responses for students who were categorised into six groups based on two factors. Factor one relates to student responses to question 14 of the questionnaires. Students were selected because they chose either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘strongly disagree’. Factor two relates to student outcomes in the form of UCAS points. Initially these students were asked to participate based on their predicted outcomes. However, the table displays groupings reflecting their final outcomes. The outcomes were segregated into the same three groups as for the quantitative data test in RQ4 (see Table 3.9).

Quantitative data

The analysis of questionnaire data sought to answer RQ2 quantitatively and required tests in SPSS (IBM Corp, 2013). RQ2 also required the use of preliminary cross-tab tests and normal distribution tests. Firstly, the ’Cross tabs’ technique in SPSS was used to conduct a preliminary analysis of the data to address RQ2. This process was advocated by Field (2013) and involved a process of ‘setting the scene’ in relation to various factors. For the current project this was deemed to be important for attainment, age, ethnicity, course and gender. The choice to use non-parametric tests to answer RQ2 was taken due to the finding that data were non-normally distributed and non-continuous (see below).

Use of non-parametric tests:

There was much deliberation by the researcher regarding the use of parametric or non-parametric tests because different factors were explored against attainment which was deemed to be a form of non-continuous data due to the nature of the UCAS points score system. Parametric testing is regarded as appropriate for use with normally distributed, continuous data (Bryman and Cramer, 2011). However, non-parametric tests should be completed on data which is non-normally distributed and non-continuous (Field, 2013). UCAS data were checked for normal distribution in three ways:

1) The Shapiro-Wilk test where a p value above 0.05 demonstrates non-significance (i.e. normal distribution)
2) The Skewness and Kurtosis test where the value of z should be between -1.95 and +1.95 (z is calculated for each test by taking the 'statistic' value and dividing it by the standard error value)
3) Histograms and Q-Q plots.

The decision to use non-parametric tests was taken because although the UCAS data showed normal distribution for the Q-Q plot and mean, median and mode, the other statistical test values (above) and the histogram suggest otherwise (see appendix M for more detail on this justification), which consequently means that the data was treated as non-normally distributed.

Data related to RQ2 were analysed using the following tests. All were performed using SPSS (SPSS, IBM Corp, 2013).

The Kruskal-Wallis test is the non-parametric counterpart of the Anova and is used as an analysis of variance. It is used to test the differences between several independent groups (Field, 2013). This test was necessary as it explored whether there was a significant difference in outcomes between different groups of student responses. This was deemed the most appropriate and useful test for Likert scale data where it was segregated into the categories of 'strongly agree, agree, neither agree not disagree, disagree, strongly disagree' and the Kruskal-Wallis test can identify whether the outcomes for students are significantly different between these categories. A means plot was used to identify patterns in the data. Data shows statistical significance if the value is below 0.05. Results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test are reported in the following format, as recommended by Laerd (2013):

$X^2(2)$ = chi squared value, p = significance value

The Mann-Whitney test is similar to the Kruskal-Wallis test (above) except that it compares just *two* independent conditions. In the current study it was necessary to use this test for gender (male and female). It is reported in the following format:

U = Mann-Whitney U value, p = significance value

Research Question Three:

Research Question Three asked “Is there a statistically significant difference in student responses to statements about PIB according to student age, ethnic group, gender or course?” This question was answered using Likert scale questionnaire quantitative data gathered from 240 students where students were asked to respond to statements regarding their PIB. The ‘compare column proportions’ tool in SPSS used the Pearson Chi-Squared test of significance (Field, 2013) to determine whether the amount students agreed or disagreed with certain PIB differed across the factors of: age, ethnicity, gender and course. Each PIB statement was analysed separately for the factors.

This process identifies if the items are dependent on or independent from each other and uses the proportions in the rows and columns to calculate this (i.e. it attempts to see which rows or columns are responsible for any relationship) by producing a cross-tabulation (Hinton, McMurray and Brownlow, 2014 and IBM, 2017). It does this by assigning a letter key to each category of the column variables (IBM, 2017). It uses the Pearson Chi Squared test as well as the Z-test (Field, 2013).

To perform the analysis for RQ3, the different factors were recoded as this gave the opportunity for more robust analysis. As an example, when answering the questionnaire, students placed themselves into *thirteen* different ethnic categories. These were recoded to *five* categories since it was deemed more appropriate to include larger number of participants in each category. Age and course were also recoded as can be seen in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8: Recoding for age, course and ethnicity			
	Age	**Course**	**Ethnicity**
Original groupings	17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26	Engineering, Construction, Health and Social Care, IT, Public Services, Sport, Childcare, Business, Outdoor Education, Travel and tourism, Visual arts, Performing arts	White British, White other, Asian British Indian, Asian British Pakistani, Asian British Bangladeshi, Other Asian background, Black British Caribbean, Black British African, Black other, Mixed White and Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black African, Mixed White and Asian, Other
Recoded groupings	17-18 19-20 21+	**Care:** Health, Childcare, Public services **Science:** Engineering, IT, Construction **Commercial:** Travel and tourism and business **Physical:** Sports, outdoor education **Arts:** Visual and performing	White Black Asian Mixed Other

Research Question Four:

Research question four asked “Can distinct models of student experiences be determined through exploration of both quantitative and qualitative data and, if they can: a) are these models of student experiences reflective of the hypothesised categories of DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV and b) is there any association with student attainment?” RQ4 was answered using both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data is gleaned from the questionnaire responses of 240 participants. The qualitative data is gathered from three

different research tools (Focus Groups, Questionnaires and Interviews) and builds on themes developed for RQ1.

Qualitative data

Answering RQ4 saw the development of three diagrams which acted as a stepping stone towards development of the final theory: the 'Layers of Influence' diagram (LoID) which identifies six different MoSE (models of student experiences). These models were created in response to student perception and were based on an interpretation of the themes which were gathered to answer RQ1 which were used to create the two hierarchies (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3). In regard to Bazeley (2016), the notion of interrogation of data was presented through linking themes together to create visualisations and creates a holistic view of student experiences and a model to be tested in similar college contexts, which allows the data to be challenged. The 'Relate' technique involved asking the following questions: 'under what conditions does this theme arise and are there divergent views'? What are the consequences? How widely are these themes supported? As can be seen, 'describe' 'compare' and 'relate' techniques underpin the development of the final qualitative model and are an extension of the findings for RQ1 as is set out below.

1) Information was coded via creation of nodes and identification of themes (describe). A hierarchy was created to display the complex nature of the information gathered, where layers were used to organise findings (RQ1).
2) Secondary analysis: Findings were explored and patterns of themes across research tools were organised into a table to show the links between themes (Table 4.2) which contributed to RQ1. Associations between themes were then further visualised through diagrams and mind-maps (relate) (see figure 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6).
3) Tertiary analysis: Findings gathered from answering RQ1 (which included a comparison of themes across tools – see above) as well as figures 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 were culminated to theorise an overall model (figure 4.7) representing a holistic

picture of student experiences through pulling all the findings together to answer RQ4.

The specific process used to build up a picture of student experiences is outlined below. It was unique to the needs of the project and unfolded in response to the findings. It included:

1) Using a hand-written mind-map to identify themes and exploring their associations with other themes using coded comments in NVIVO and a comparative tool (Table 4.2)
2) Identifying 'similar stories' reported by students by exploring raw data (nodes) collected from all research tools in NVIVO and making lists of behaviours that were reported to associate
3) Analysing the diagrams produced by following Bazeley's 'relate' technique to interrogate data and identify how all the key ideas might fit together to create a holistic model.

Specifically, to facilitate this process, the researcher used the following questions:

- To what extent is this reflective of all students' experiences?
- How and why are there differences?
- Which experiences reflect the majority (i.e. when all qualitative data had been coded) and how do these themes present themselves in association with other themes?
- Which experiences reflect the minority (i.e. when all qualitative data had been coded) and what are the reasons for the connections between themes?
- What is the difference between themes for intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors?
- How do different student experiences associate with each other overall?

The questions above provoked a reflection/exploration of the common associations and differences between themes/nodes. Initially, three groups were established. One for

‘independence’, one for ‘DAPSS’ and one for ‘absent interest’. However, when the themes were explored in more detail, it was seen that there were subtle differences within the groups and so they were split again to create the final six. This process required a cycle of exploration of data and a proposal of ideas for a best fit model which was adapted and changed again and again as the findings were understood. As an example, the initial ‘independence’ model contained many similar themes but as the analysis became more detailed, some fundamental differences of student experiences were realised. E.g. it was clear that some students within this group were confident in the existence of a safety net and the responsiveness of parents/carers, whereas others seemed to have total independence and so this initial category split into two groups to create the final ‘Clarified Independence’ and ‘Supposed Independence’ models which reflected the majority of student experiences. Likewise, the idea of ‘absent parental interest’ was split into two to create the ‘Dismissed’ and ‘Headstrong’ categories as, although both experienced minimal parental interest, there were clear differences relating to how students reacted/communicated their perceptions of their situation and their feeling for motivation (or lack of). Additionally, exploration of the DAPSS category revealed some subtle differences in regard to the various attitudes of expectations and aspirations which saw the group further splitting into two to create ‘Authoritised PEAV’ and ‘Authoritised NE-PAV’.

The LoID model/theory (see Figure 4.7) was tested/checked by looking at focus group participants and identifying their responses, then cross checking their responses with their questionnaire data (and if applicable, their interview data – but this was not common, as the interviews were only completed by a minority of the student cohort). Responses were matched to a model in the LoID. Every student experience was seen to be reflected in one of the six models, although some students did not report to experience every aspect (layer) in the model because they either a) had not chosen to or b) had not had the opportunity to provide details relating to every aspect.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data was used in a number of ways to answer RQ4. The focus groups served as an opportunity to explore the relationships between the PIB statements (including to identify any potential bias or misinterpretation by participants). In order to begin to unpick the groupings of different PIB, the focus group PIB statement choices were organised using Excel to explore the raw data and identified relationships/patterns between statements quantitatively. The data were visually coded for clarity using red to highlight statements that had been chosen which contradicted each other, green to demarcate statements where one statement from an opposing pair was chosen and white to highlight where neither statement in an opposing pair was chosen. The most popular and least popular statements were identified as well as links between DAPSS, PAPSS, PEAV and NEAV statements (Table 4.10).

On a much larger scale, the questionnaire quantitative data regarding Likert scale responses to the PIB statements (which represented 240 students) were analysed in SPSS (IBM Corp, 2013) as this is viewed as a reliable and widely used statistical analysis programme which is fit for purpose for this study. Field (2013) and Bryman and Cramer (2011) among others, have written extensively on the use of SPSS. Their guidance was used to support exploration of the quantitative data. Excel was also used to organise data in tables and this was particularly helpful in ensuring that the data were coded correctly before it was imported into SPSS. The questionnaires collected Likert scale data of student responses to their perceptions of PIB which allowed patterns to emerge in relation to whether certain behaviours were commonly perceived together (by students). This analysis was completed in three stages to satisfy RQ4. The first test (Cronbach Alpha) established whether there was internal consistency in the predicted groupings (PAPSS, DAPSS, NEAV and PEAV). A further test (Categorical Factor Analysis) was then used to identify whether student experiences of PIB could be categorised differently to the predicted groupings. Finally, Multi-Nominal Logistic Regression was used to explore whether these groupings were associated

to attainment in any way. The Cronbach Alpha test was performed using SPSS (SPSS, IBM Corp, 2013). The Cronbach Alpha test in this instance is used as a form of reliability analysis which was advocated by Field (2013) and is considered an appropriate test to measure internal consistency in a confirmatory sense (i.e. there is some indication that the items group together). Laerd (2013) identified that this test is most commonly used on multiple items gathered from a questionnaire and so was justified as a reliable way to gain a sense of whether items could be grouped or not. Its purpose, therefore was to test whether the initial DAPSS, PAPSS, PEAV and NEAV categories appeared as four groups of parenting styles by identifying how closely they formed a group.

The Cronbach Alpha test produces one main important value. This value shows consistency in a group where the value is 0.7 or above. However, for large sample sizes (such as the size of the current study), 0.6 is acceptable (Field, 2013). Each group (DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV) had one value each to demonstrate internal consistency.

CFA was used to identify whether responses to PIB statements appeared to load together on the same factors (i.e. group together). In contrast to the Cronbach Alpha test (above) the CFA was used as it was deemed to be more exploratory in nature (i.e. could be used with a larger range of PIB statements taken from all the initial four categories) rather than confirmatory (as the Cronbach Alpha was deemed appropriate to test initial groupings of PAPSS, DAPSS, PEAV and NEAV). The intention for this test was to identify whether a range of PIB statements appeared to form groups and is recommended for use with Likert-type data (Field, 2013).

SPSS ‘R menu’ package was used to perform Categorical Factor Analysis. Basto and Pereira (2012) advocate the use of this package in SPSS because it is designed to create more reliable outputs with ordinal data gathered from Likert Scale responses. Specifically, it is more appropriate than using SPSS alone as Basto and Pereira (2012) note that it:

a) Identifies a Polychoric correlation matrix which heightens reliability

b) Has a wider range of rotation techniques than SPSS

c) Has not been found to overestimate the true number of factors (as SPSS has).

Additionally, using Cronbach's Alpha has been seen to have some limitations when exploring Likert Style data as a measure of internal consistency and so the Ordinal Alpha value is used for Categorical Factor analysis instead (Fraser, 2016). The Ordinal Alpha use is justified specifically because it is viewed to be more reliable due to its calculation based on the Polychoric correlation matrix, produced in SPSS R-Menu rather than the Pearson correlation and so is seen to be more accurate when using ordinal data to explore links between items (Gadermann, Guhn and Zumbo, 2012).

This choice was also justified because RQ4 also asks whether the groupings are associated to attainment and uses the CFA to perform Multinominal Logistic Regression, required to establish whether the groups have any bearing on or association with student outcomes.

The process analysed 22 items (PIB statements) using Varimax Rotation. Two PIB statements were excluded from this analysis due to identifying problems with these statements in previous analysis and issues relating to misinterpretation (4d and 5d). The Varimax Rotation was used since the nature of the data suited this procedure in respect of the PIB statements and their link with perceptions. Field (2013) recommends that any psychological or perception-based data uses this method. Rotation refers to a process where data is analysed in a three-dimensional format. The purpose of the rotation technique is to simplify the factor structure. Brown (2009) advocates the use of rotation for this type of test and suggest that it allows the pattern of loadings to be more pronounced, enabling clearer researcher interpretation. Field (2013) also recommends rotation as it maximises loading onto the extracted factors, giving a clearer picture of relationships between items. Specifically, Basto and Pereira (2012) favour rotation because it makes the interpretation of factors less subjective. Additionally, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test was applied to check the sampling adequacy: KMO = 0.730. Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999) suggest that values greater than 0.5 are acceptable but describe KMO values greater than 0.8 as good. This

confirms that the data were adequate to be used for this test.Multinominal Logistic Regression was used to relate parental involvement (independent variables) to outcomes in the form of UCAS points (dependent variable) and can be completed after the CFA process has been completed (above). Regression works specifically by representing the combined influence of a group of variables on the dependent variable (in this case, total UCAS points). It can identify the strength of the relation and also control (i.e. remove the influence) of other independent variables (Hoy and Adams, 2016). Additionally, Multinominal Logistical Regression works by using a technique called maximum likelihood estimation, rather than least squares estimation used in traditional multiple regression (O'Halloran, 2017 and Bayaga, 2010). Maximum likelihood estimation is seen as appropriate for the current study because the data is ordinal.

Multinominal Logistic Regression is recommended for use with items that have three or more response categories and so with 5-point Likert type data in the current project, it is justified for use (Menard, 2002). Logistic regression is similar to multiple regression but is justified where variables are categorical (Field, 2013 and Hinton, McMurray and Brownlow, 2014) and so is seen as appropriate for the current project, since UCAS data and statement response data are both categorical. Therefore, the justification for using Multinomial Logistic regression is that the dependent variable (outcome) is an ordinal variable, so use of other tests suitable for continuous data sets may potentially create bias if used on the current data set.

To perform the test, students' UCAS point outcomes had to be segregated into three groups so that patterns could be identified. The BTEC awards system means that UCAS points were structured in the groups as is seen in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Grouping UCAS points to reflect low, moderate and high outcomes

Outcomes	Points				Number of students represented
Low	80	120	160	200	81
Moderate	240	260	280	320	87
High	360	380	400	420	59

Causation and the reactive hypothesis

When dealing with quantitative data, the researcher must distinguish between causation and correlation/association. The causation problem in parental involvement research (and the important idea that children influence parental behaviours) has also been identified in recent years by Farkas (2014), Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013), Ciping et al (2015), Shumow (2014), Yurk-Quadlin (2015) Hamlin (2014) and Hoglund et al (2015). Causation suggests that one factor directly influences another. However, correlation/association notes that there may be links between factors but accepts that it is difficult to explore the ways in which one factor may influence another. As an example, high student grades may associate with high parental expectations (and indeed parental expectations may increase in response to high student performance), but high parental expectation alone may not contribute to or result in high student grades. Similarly, helicopter parenting (an imposing surveillance method) may not directly result in lower student grades (as concluded by Robinson and Harris, 2014) but parents may only become involved in students' education (and use helicopter methods) if the parents perceive that their child is failing or struggling. Therefore, the apparent correlation between more involvement and lower grades in this research is, in fact, not demonstrating an effect of involvement, but is demonstrating a parental response to prior poor attainment. Greene (2015), condemns the lack of consideration of causation, particularly for the Robinson and Harris (2014) study. Indeed, when exploring parental involvement and

attainment, many researchers have argued using the line of causation, which is problematic. As Bryman and Cramer (2011) suggest: “causal inferences from correlational research can be hazardous” (Bryman and Cramer, 2011, p.281). The problem of causation has also been referred to as the *reactive hypothesis* (e.g. Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman, 2013; McNeal, 2012). Therefore, the current project argues for findings that relate to association only (as can be seen in Chapters Four-Six) and is careful when making conclusions or recommendations in relation to PIB.

3.4 Summary

This chapter highlights the unique approach taken to gather student perceptions regarding PIB in one UK FE context. The four research questions allowed opportunity for both quantitative and qualitative discovery and required a mixed-methods approach to complete a holistic exploration of student perception of PIB.

Methodological approaches for existing research in this area were reviewed in chapter two and it was concluded that careful consideration had to be made in relation to participant choice, measures for attainment and PIB, and a clear explanation of paradigm choice. Many projects into parental involvement have taken a positivist standpoint and few have attempted to use mixed methods. Existing projects have also been criticised for their simplistic view of causation assumptions and the problem of ‘reactive hypothesis’ as recognised by Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman, (2013) and McNeal, (2012), i.e. high expectations equals better student performance. Critiquing these aspects has allowed the opportunity to offer a methodological approach which is aware of the issues involved and the need to gain information in a variety of ways for the purposes of triangulation.

The project is rooted in positivist practices but also has interpretivist elements where it was intended in part to be responsive to student ideas/perceptions. This is mainly seen in the development of each research tool based on the themes identified as important to students, the flexibility in adapting the PIB statements in response to student feedback and the use of

an ontology that reflects ‘critical realism’. The project, therefore, reflects the post-positivist paradigm where flexibility was seen as key to exploring PIB and in answering four research questions which not only sought to determine elements of ‘how much’ but also ‘why’ and ‘how so’.

Computer software SPSS and Excel were used to support analysis of the quantitative data. A system of thematic analysis introduced by Bazeley (2016) was used to describe and compare themes which answered RQ1 and RQ2. Qualitative responses were then analysed using Bazeley’s ‘relate’ technique leading to a process which allowed information gathered in RQs 1 and 2 to be explored in detail for RQ4 and resulted in the proposition of a new theory: “the Layers of Influence Diagram” (LoID) which proposes six MoSE (models of student experience). Initially, a computer software programme called NVIVO was used to organise the wealth of qualitative information gathered.

The methodology in itself is viewed as a contribution to knowledge because PIB does not appear to have been explored in this way before. However, it is not without its limitations. These limitations have been noted, explained and justified (where appropriate) throughout this chapter and are also referred to in chapter six.

The current project offers a unique insight into student perception of PIB in a number of ways. Adopting the stance of post-positivism allowed for a celebration of mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) where the researcher gathered information holistically to support understanding into this complex phenomenon. The project highlights and justifies the use of critical realism which is often seen to associate with post-positivism where student perceptions cannot be taken as wholly true but are likely to be a reflection of parental-child relationships and home-life events. Students’ ideas and perceptions were weaved throughout and contributed to the creation of subsequent research tools, reflecting interpretivist elements. The use of a positivist underpinning coupled with a responsiveness to

student agenda (deemed more interpretivist) seats the project in the realm of post-positivism.

The same main themes appeared to weave across research tools, whether they were specifically referred to by the researcher or not, which indicated that:

a) Researcher influence was considered to be minimal and students were reflecting their experiences (critical realism)
b) Students reported similar perceptions over time between the focus groups (Oct) and interviews (June), suggesting reliability of responses through triangulation
c) There were similarities in how groups of students were constructing and explaining their experiences (this happened across age, ethnicity, course and gender) and these were pulled together to create the models of student experience diagram MoSE (see Chapter Four).

Chapter Four: Findings

4.1 Introduction

Presentation of the findings is ordered by research question. Indeed, this process was identified by Hamilton (2011) who advised that for analysing case studies in educational research, the researcher needs to return to the original research questions and present them in a logical order for purposes of clarity.

The questionnaire was completed by 240 students and provided information relating to student age, gender, course and ethnicity as well as perceptions of PIB. The focus groups involved twenty-four students and sixteen students took part in in-depth interviews.

The questionnaires were completed by students across eleven different subject areas (which covered twenty distinct courses) based on gatekeeper access. These groups were combined in tutorial groups where subject areas were similar e.g. Mechanical and Aero Engineering were labelled “Engineering”, Acting, Dance and Music/drama were labelled “Performing arts” and Media and Art were labelled as “Visual Arts”. The two subject areas most highly represented were Information Technology (IT) (17 percent) and Visual Arts (19 percent). Three courses had less than ten students represented. These were Construction, Public Services and Travel and Tourism. The focus groups involved students across five different courses. These were Music and Drama, Travel and Tourism, Sports, Hairdressing and Public Services. Each focus group represented one course. Interviews included students enrolled on Construction, Travel and Tourism, Health and Social Care, IT, Business studies and Engineering.

Of those students who identified with either sex (five students selected ‘prefer not to say’), 63 percent were male and 37 percent were female.

Ages of students for level three courses involved in the study spanned from 17 to 26. The majority of students were 18 (40%). This was to be expected for students who were studying on the second year of their BTEC level 3 course programme. The next most common age

group was 19 years at 24%. Students aged 17 accounted for 22% of the population and 10% were 20 years old. Students between the ages of 21-26 years made up 4% of the total student population.

White British students accounted for nearly 72 percent of the respondents. The least represented group was “Mixed race” at 4.2 percent.

When reviewing the data, some points of note are:

1) The highest proportion of students aged 19 (i.e. older than would be expected for the second year of a BTEC extended diploma, since most students enrol on their 1st year at age 16) were studying IT and Visual Arts.
2) In terms of age and ethnicity, the highest group represented were 18-year old White British students.
3) Across all courses, the majority were White British students
4) Some courses were dominated by either sex. For example, Engineering, Construction and Sport had no female students at all. Information Technology and Outdoor Education were male dominated whereas Health and Social Care and Childcare were female dominated.
5) The largest group within the study was made up of White British male students who accounted for 45 percent of the total students.

Students who reported to have Special Educational Needs (SEN) (four students) were not included in the quantitative (statistical) analysis where attainment was a factor because their attainment levels were considerably lower than the average. Students were asked in the questionnaire if they had a home tutor to support them with their college work but no students ticked this box. This is important because if students had external support, it may inaccurately represent a relationship or association between a different form of parental financial involvement and attainment which was not the focus of the study.

In order to understand the data more fully, the following table (Table 4.1) outlines the numbers of students in each category for factors that are important specifically for RQ 2 and 3. Cultural capital is not included in the table because it was difficult to measure quantitatively.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics

Subject Area	**Gender**			**Age Group**		
	Males	Females	PNS	16-18	19-21	21+
Business Studies	11	5	0	7	8	1
Construction	5	0	0	5	0	0
Engineering	23	0	1	19	5	0
Health/Social/Child Care	1	32	0	19	10	4
Information Technology	37	3	1	19	21	1
Outdoor Education	21	3	1	17	8	0
Performing Arts	9	13	0	15	7	0
Public Services	6	2	0	7	1	0
Sport	12	0	0	5	7	0
Travel and Tourism	2	6	1	6	3	0
Visual Arts	20	24	1	28	17	0

4.2 Research question one

Research Question one asked whether themes could be identified as important to students with regard to their parental involvement. It also asked whether views between students, college guidance, Ofsted and the DQS (policy maker) were different. As explained in Chapter Three, nodes and themes were structured within two hierarchies when analysed in NVIVO to reflect that all themes were seen to be aligned around two main factors: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Aspects of extrinsic motivation were more frequently

discussed than intrinsic motivation. However, this is not a surprising revelation as students were specifically asked to report on their parental involvement, which was perceived by students as a form of extrinsic motivation. Students also noted that extrinsic motivation, in some cases, influenced intrinsic motivation. There are occasions where themes do overlap between the two and this has been noted below during the analysis process. However, for the purposes of developing a detailed structure, separating the two forms of motivation enabled the themes and nodes to be explored as succinctly as possible.

As can be seen on the following pages, the hierarchy of extrinsic motivation contained a total of 82 aspects/issues that were identified by students. These were split into two super-themes, eight main themes, 16 super-nodes, 27 nodes and 29 sub-nodes. See section 3.3.3.2 in Chapter Three for explanation of what levels were deemed ‘themes’ and ‘nodes’.

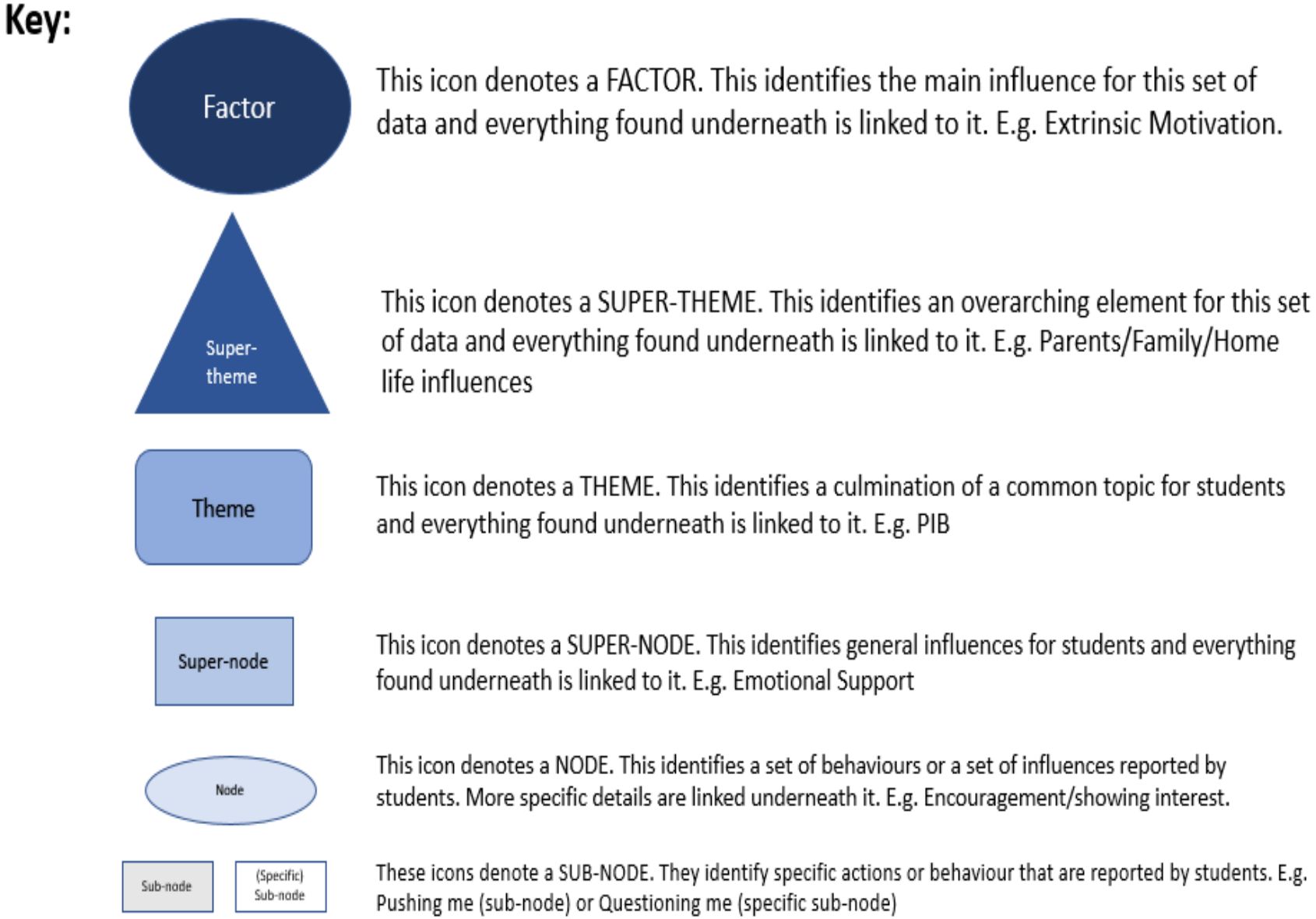
The hierarchy of intrinsic motivation contained a total of 24 aspects/issues as highlighted by the students. These were split into two super-themes, 10 themes, three super-nodes, seven nodes and two sub-nodes.

As identified in Chapter Three, the themes developed from the focus groups fed into the development of the questionnaire and findings from the questionnaire influenced the interview questions. The *main* themes from the focus groups related to: responsiveness/reactiveness of parents/carers in response to grades, parental values for education, parental incompetence in the subject, change in PIB over time and student assertion/ability to control PIB. The interview questions were influenced by a culmination of themes gathered from both the focus groups and questionnaires. The questionnaires highlighted the following *main* themes: parental/carer/student relationships, student satisfaction with PIB, support mechanisms provided, parental perception of independence and development of independence, desired changes to support, influences for education (i.e. lecturers/tutors, parents/carers or peers) and motivation.

In this section, important themes are identified and the key nodes within them are explored and explained. Many pertinent examples have been noted/chosen to offer a clearer insight into student perceptions. Where students have been quoted, some details are given such as their gender (denoted by F, M or PNS (prefer not to say)), age (in years), ethnicity (see key on questionnaire) and course (due to these being key factors in the current project) a pseudonym (set of three letters) and (where applicable) the number of the focus group they took part in (e.g. *F.18.WB.Dance.Kgh.G4*).

Note that it was not possible to mention all nodes identified in the hierarchies due to an overwhelming wealth of information. Therefore, through interpretation, this section has both drawn on the most common perceptions, alongside perceptions where experiences may reflect diversity and/or unpredicted events which were of interest. Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 on the following pages show the key and final hierarchies developed from the analysis process.

Figure 4.1: Key for Motivation Hierarchies



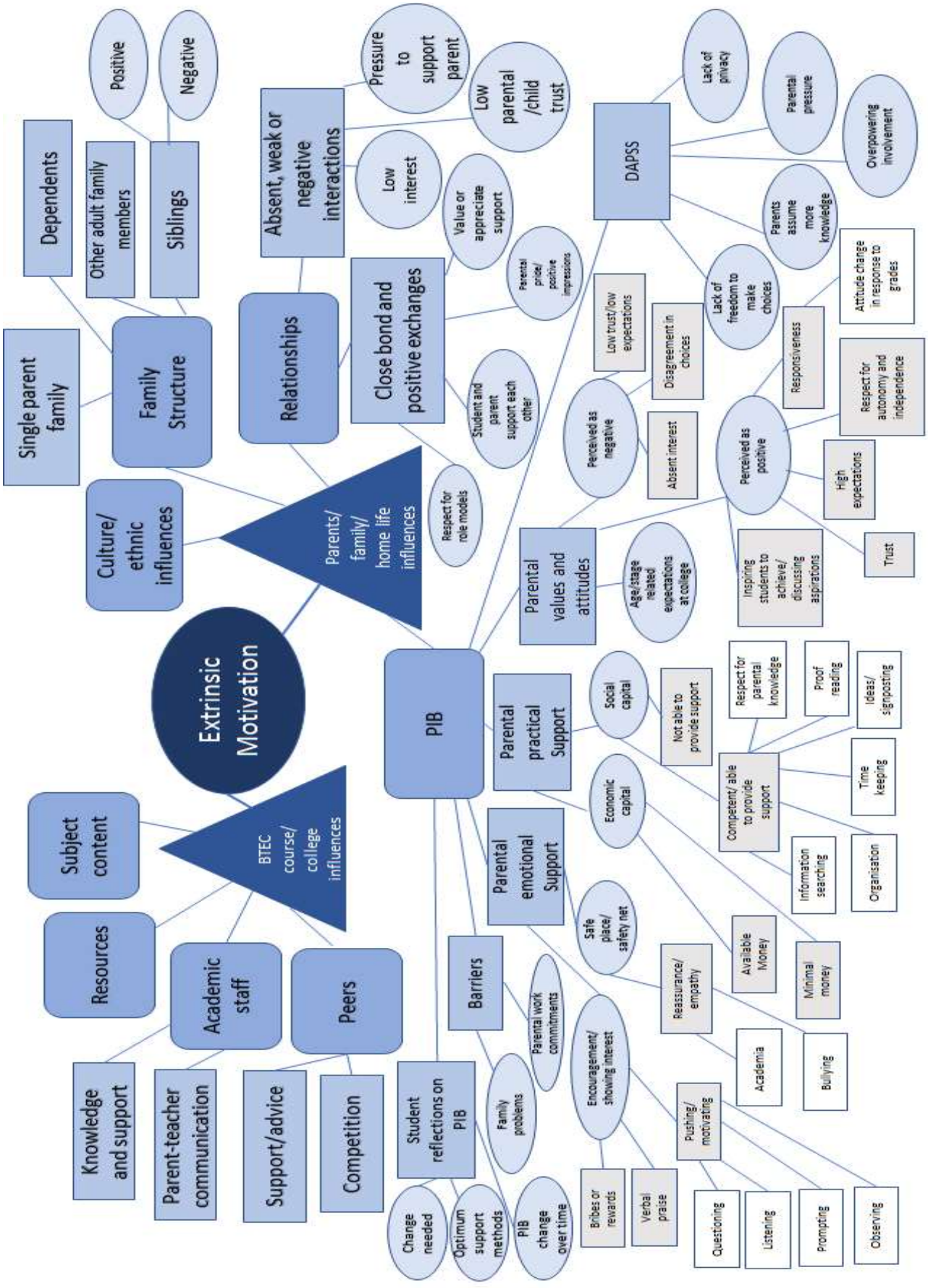


Figure 4.2: The Hierarchy of Extrinsic Motivation

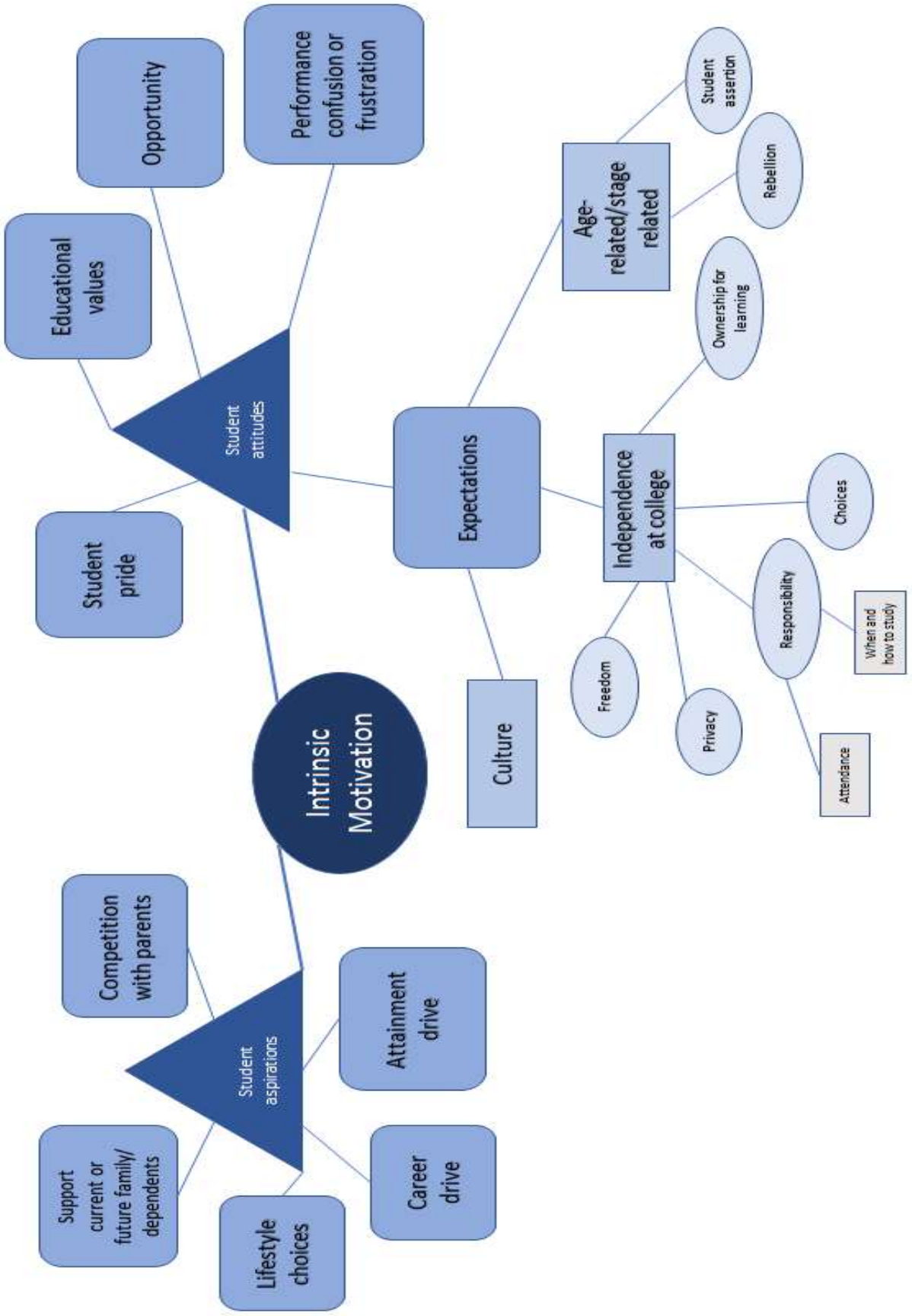


Figure 4.3: The Hierarchy of Intrinsic Motivation

4.2.1 Extrinsic motivation

The hierarchy of extrinsic motivation contained two ‘super themes’. These were:

- Parents/family/home-life factors
- BTEC College course factors

Raising of the participation age (RPA) was only mentioned by two students and identified in the literature review in Chapter Two as a potential influence for learners in FE. However, students referred to their knowledge of its existence and did not feel it had any additional influences in their choice to be at college. Therefore, RPA does not feature in the hierarchy of extrinsic motivation. Although BTEC College/course factors were mentioned by students, the two key influences within this super-theme were:

A) College lecturers as influential extrinsic motivators (particularly for students who felt they lacked parental practical and emotional support at home)
B) Nature of the high-level subject-specific content which was often seen as a barrier to parental help/support due to lack of parental competence and/or knowledge

However, the super theme of ‘parents/family/home life factors’ held the greatest level of information. This was not surprising, since this was the focus of the study. It included four themes:

- PIB
- Culture/ethnic factors
- Family Structure
- Relationships

Although family structure, relationships and culture/ethnic factors were identified as important influences for a minority of students, the majority of responses within this super theme referred to PIB (again this was easily predicted as this reflects the nature of the questions asked). PIB included the following five super-nodes:

- Emotional Support

- Practical Support
- General perceptions of PIB
- Values and attitudes
- DAPSS

Due to the complexity of the project topic, some perceptions are identified to interlink across different nodes/themes within the hierarchy and will be referred to where appropriate. However, to present a logical structure to encompass this wealth of information, the important themes and nodes have been separated into subheadings which reflect the structure of themes and nodes within the two hierarchies. Refer to the hierarchy diagrams and key (Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3) as a source of navigation for the structure of explanations below.

4.2.1.1(Super-theme) Parents/family/home-life factors

This section is broken down into the themes of PIB, culture/ethnic factors, family structure and relationships, which are broken down further, as is explained underneath each sub-heading.

(Theme) PIB

PIB encompasses the super-nodes of parental values and attitudes, emotional support, student personal reflections of PIB and practical support.

(Super-node) Parental values and attitudes

This super-node is placed under the category of PIB and parent/family/home life factors. Values and attitudes refers to students' perception of how parents/carers feel about college education and learning/attainment. Although a minority of students did not report a strong sense of understanding of parental values and attitudes for education, for the majority of students, where parents/carers show interest in college work, values for education are demonstrated in two ways:

1. Parents/carers show interest in their college life and performance in relation to outcomes. They do this by asking questions or by checking attendance or using surveillance techniques.
2. Parents/carers discuss the use of education to follow a path or make the most of the opportunities in life, which links to parental aspirations or regrets. E.g.

"My dad has always said to me he's always been like make sure you get a good education because that's what he didn't do." (F.18.WB.Public Services.Jpw.G4)

Students also reflect these attitudes in their own educational values, where they discuss opportunities, 'open doors' and becoming more 'well-rounded'. As with the example above, students are often receptive to their parents' aspirations and in turn want to gain respect by making them proud. Indeed, values of education appear to drive intrinsic motivation.

Below, aspects of parental values and attitudes are broken down further into parental responsiveness, respect for autonomy and independence, trust, parental aspirations and expectations, absent interest and DAPSS.

(Node) Parental responsiveness

The sub node 'Parental responsiveness' was seen as a positive parental behaviour (node) and linked to parental values and attitudes, PIB and parental/home/life factors. Parental responsiveness refers to actions of the parents/carers in response to student needs. It has strong connections with the idea of a 'safe place' where students identified parental flexibility in the offer of support. This theme was identified across research tools but was referred to most commonly during the interviews. There was a strong sense that students were able to control the amount of involvement they received which was understood/respected by parents/carers. This aspect was labelled as 'student assertion' and forms a node in the 'hierarchy of intrinsic motivation'. This also linked to parental trust and respect for student independence. e.g.

"*Yes. They still help me if needed but they know it is important for me to learn it myself and have my own independence" (F.18.WB.Dance, Lof).*

It was also noted that parental responsiveness is likely to be linked to the recognition of student values and intrinsic motivation and this emphasises that PIB is not fixed and is likely to be fluid with changing needs:

"I think my attitude towards education affects my parents' involvement. Whereas during GCSEs I was fairly unmotivated and didn't ask for help, now I am much more passionate. I enjoy talking to them about what I do and asking for advice. Basically, if I ask for involvement, I get it. Otherwise they respect and trust me to get on alone". (F.20.WB.Media.Eme)

Responsiveness also relates to changes of behaviour in response to formative grades. Question six of the questionnaire asked students whether certain grades would change their parents'/carers' type of involvement. A total of 184 participants reported that their grades would not alter parent/carer attitudes with students stressing the importance of responsibility, autonomy, age, student choices, trust and expectations.

In the questionnaire responses, approximately 15 percent of students admitted that they do not share their grades with parents/carers and so PIB remains unchanged due to parental lack of knowledge.

Low outcomes were reported to result in attempted parental/carer control attempts for approximately 35 percent of students with 18 percent reporting that parents/carers would be more likely to offer gentle encouragement or surveillance in response to low grades or failed assignments, rather than control. Students were also likely to report that parents/carers would only provide help if they were asked to, which relates to responsiveness and respect for autonomy e.g.

“They respect my choices and abilities and will only support me in ways I ask them to” (F.20.WB.Media.Trw)

Interestingly, 29 responses to this question related to the lack of involvement or interest shown by parents/carers, the majority of whom reported that there is no involvement at all and parents/carers would not even know or be interested by grades. This view only accounts for 12 percent of students in the questionnaires but is noted across courses and for both genders.

As well as students wanting to assert their feeling towards independence and ownership, it was also apparent that often students had come to an agreement with their parents/carers about how much/which types of PIB they appreciated, which links to parental responsiveness. Some parents/carers clearly do want to be involved, but the students maintain a barrier which allows for autonomy and links to rebellious behaviour in the face of control. E.g.:

> *“My Mum knows that if she got involved there is a chance that I just wouldn't do it at all” (F.19.WB.Outdoor Education.Hsd)*

(Node) Parental respect for autonomy and independence

The sub-node ‘respect for autonomy and independence’ refers to allowance of freedom to make choices in relation to college work. The majority of students hold strong opinions in support of independence, freedom, choices and responsibility which appear to associate with intrinsic motivation and are a passive form of extrinsic motivation (i.e. if parents/carers show they trust and respect students to work independently, students appear to reciprocate/match their behaviour to those expectations). Autonomy and independence were referred to by data gathered from all research tools with more detail being offered in the focus groups and interviews. Within this node there are associations with age (and college-stage) related expectations, responsibility, trust and want of satisfaction/happiness for students. However, the main underlying idea relates to intrinsic motivation:

"They let me do what I want. I think if it's for me, I'm more likely to do better, like pass the course and have the drive to do it" (F.17.ABI.Hairdressing.Zsz.G7)

In addition to this, students felt that their choices in relation to college were of more value than their parents' choices because they were underpinned by specific knowledge of the subject, where the students had attended the classes and so had greater knowledge to that of their parents/carers. However, approximately 50 percent of students were also clear that parents/carers were needed for encouragement and could at times act like a safety net, which allowed students the chance to make decisions knowing that they could be supported or "caught" if necessary. The idea of a safety net is developed further under the super-node of 'emotional support'. These students reported that encouragement was an important factor, alongside independence and felt that some parental involvement was necessary.

However, although the majority of students reported that they had a positive sense of autonomy in their work, a minority in this group stated that their parents/carers did not ask or did not care about their college work suggesting that they had autonomy, but that it was not necessarily backed with positive parental attitudes and so falls into the 'absent interest' node which links to negative parental values and attitudes. The majority of students said they had interested parents/carers, but they allowed the student to come to them when support was needed, which has links with the idea of parental responsiveness, discussed above.

During the interview process, respect for autonomy and independence was mentioned on 27 occasions by 11 different students. This was associated with flexibility, trust, space, freedom, learning from mistakes, age expectations and high previous grades. The main driver behind parental respect links to parental knowledge and evidence of students' motivation for learning and of previous attainment, which in turn links to trust and expectations.

Student perceptions revealed that independence and autonomy were supported or influenced by:

1) Lack of parental interest in college

2) Lack of involvement due to lack of skills/knowledge
3) Parental trust and respect for student decisions and knowledge of student capabilities
4) Age/stage related expectations

One interviewee Jp2, who was aged 21 and studying IT, felt that development of independence was forced due to bullying at school where no friends are reported to have been made. When asked about motivation, the participant replied that it was just down to 'having fun'.

The qualitative (written responses) from the questionnaires specifically found that parental respect for autonomy and independence was related to:

- trust as a result of previous attainment
- student choices and ownership
- expectations with age
- intrinsic motivation
- Preparation for university – the next stage of learning

(Node) Trust

The sub-node 'parental trust' was mentioned across all research tools and was found to link to respect for autonomy and independence (as noted above) and age/stage related expectations. However, specifically in the questionnaire data, trust was referred to on 112 occasions making it a key aspect in relation to students' perception of parental involvement for this study. Parental trust was seen to closely relate to the following:

- Subject specific knowledge at FE (level 3) E.g. "*As I have gotten older and study has become more independent, their input lessened. I think this is because they trusted me to study on my own and they didn't have a lot of knowledge in the more depth subjects" (M.17.WB.IT.Ade)*

- Knowledge of student aspirations e.g. *"My parents accept me with which ever subject I study as they know I am passionate about becoming an actress" (F.17.WB.Acting.Jaa)*
- Age and responsibility/autonomy and freedom e.g. "*I have matured and shown more responsibility. This allows my mum to have more trust in me and my work" (M.20.WI.Act.Rel)*
- Proven student ability in prior tests e.g. *"I've become more independent since then and have gone through series of tests to prove myself" (M.17.WB.Construction.Bae)* and "*They were more involved in early life, but found out I succeeded more when I was more independent" (M.19.WB.Med.Dam)*
- Knowledge that the student will 'try their best' e.g. *"They always know that I try my best in what I do" (F.19.ABB.Child.Lio)*

Interestingly, although student trust relates strongly to autonomy and freedom, many students chose to also mention the idea of a safety net and/or parental responsiveness which has links with the super-node of 'emotional support' e.g.

"They would trust me to work it out for myself but I believe I would go to them if I needed anything" (M.19.WB.Engineering.Juy)

A total of 54 questionnaire qualitative responses (accounting for 22 percent of students) related to attainment of high outcomes and subsequent parental trust. Where students reported that their high grades had resulted in a greater sense of autonomy, this was seen to link to: parental knowledge of students' potential, proof of motivation through previous attainment, expectations for independence with age, lower levels of surveillance and respect for learner knowledge/ability. However, a minority of students chose to point out that their parent/carer would be flexible in their approach in response to student need at the time. The focus group discussions also highlighted a change in PIB in response to grades. Some students reported that when they had proved themselves with their grades, their parents/carers became more relaxed and had higher confidence in them.

(Node) Parental aspirations and expectations

'Parental aspirations' relates to encouragement of a particular route, destination, experience or outcome which is communicated to students through PIB and, although subtly different, does present links with expectations. It was identified in data collected across all research tools. 'Parental aspirations' is reflective of positive parental values and attitudes for future study.

The interviews in particular highlighted that parental aspirations appeared to drive student aspirations and were also seen to be a motivator for students. It is also related to role modelling and students' desire to follow the path of their parents/carers:

"My parents have inspired me to work hard so I can get the job I want… they both really love their jobs and I want to be happy in my job like they are happy in their jobs". (F.21.ABP.TravelTourism.Qke.G6)

Interestingly, when parental and student aspirations differed, students reported that the majority of parents/carers had respect, even if they did not understand the reasons for the differing life choices.

During the focus groups, five students described how their parents/carers disagreed with their choice of path at college. Three of the students reported that their parents/carers eventually respected their decision and offered support/interest after a period where they had asserted their independence. However, the other two students reported parental opposition which caused them to assert their choices. *E.g. "if that is what I want to do then they can't stop me" (M.17.WO.PublicServices.Wof.G4)*

Expectations (i.e. the understanding that another person will fulfil an outcome or activity) had clear links with students' intrinsic motivation. This related to autonomy, past parental experiences, parental trust, parental aspirations and student choice. E.g.

"My parents trust me to do college work myself. It's just really self-motivated for me. Literally, they….want me to do well and stuff but they've said from the beginning. "This is up to you"". (M.17.WB.MusicDrama.Ped.G8)

A minority of students (between 10-15 percent) reported confused, low or unclear aspirations and expectations and more often than not this is usually coupled with lower grades. However, an even smaller group of students who reported unclear parental aspirations or expectation have a strong sense of independence and motivation to perform highly (3 percent). They gain support from lecturers when needed and have a strong sense of value for education.

(Node) Absent interest

Absent interest was perceived in both negative and positive ways and 7 percent of questionnaire respondents reported that their parents/carers offered little or no support or had interest in their college education and the language used to describe this behaviour was negative. Phrases such as 'don't ask', 'don't care', 'don't have a clue', 'not interested' and 'happy to stay out of the way' were used consistently to describe those parents/carers with absent interest. Difficulty of the subject at level 3 was again mentioned where parents/carers had less knowledge and so did not feel able to help. However, within the category of absent interest, some students who discussed lack of parental interest or support gave reasons such as parental trust and age of independence in learning where the PIB they were receiving appeared to match the students' expectations. Not only that, these students also reported high levels of independence and autonomy and appeared to be satisfied with their parental involvement.

(Super-node) DAPSS: Directive Authoritarian Parenting Support Style

This super-node is placed under the category of PIB and parent/family/home life factors. This category relates to top down parenting pressure where students feel overpowered and lack freedom, choices and privacy. However, student feeling towards these regimes differed

depending on other factors/contexts to the extent that some students reported to be positive and satisfied with this form of involvement whereas others were frustrated. The frustrated students used language such as ‘annoying’, ‘rebel’, ‘stressed’ and ‘control’. For some students, parents/carers did not appear to have trust in them and so instigated demanding surveillance methods. E.g.

“Every day when I get in…. It’s really annoying… “have you done your assignments?” I'm like “yeah” and they are like “let me see” and I say “it’s at college” and they say “I want to see on your laptop” and I say “it's not on my laptop”. It’s really annoying. They want proof I'm doing it”. (M.18.WO.Sports.Rit.G5)

Many explained that they felt the need to set the boundaries for their PIB, but that this was eventually respected by their parents/carers. In other words, student assertion influenced parental responsiveness. Many talked about the need to make choices by themselves.

In the focus groups 10 percent of students reported this PIB in their own home with most recalling instances of DAPSS parenting from their knowledge of peers’ experiences. The majority of students felt that intrinsic motivation might be lost if the parent was controlling because the pressure of work made it ‘off-putting’. However, autonomy allows students to find the drive and interest in their work. In other words, ownership was seen to feed in to motivation. It was clear that having a drive to succeed was the most important factor in completing the course. If students perceived that they were controlled by their parents/carers, it was seen to lead in many cases to rebellion and frustration.

However, some students admitted that they needed a ‘push’ or a shift in motivation and thought that the agreement on PIB should be discussed or understood between parent and child and that this responsiveness was built on deep relationships. E.g.

“I think it's about relationships. If you understand each other then you wouldn’t need to be controlling”. (F.17.WB.Hairdressing.Gid.G7)

Others remarked that occasionally students with controlling parents/carers would receive the push to gain more highly, but that this would not necessarily lead to happiness.

Likewise, for the questionnaire responses, perceptions of DAPSS can be seen to split into two groups where students view/react to it differently. Group one relates to top-down approaches and lack of parental respect where students use negative language to describe DAPSS such as ‘stress’, ‘pressure’ and ‘bug me’. A common trait of this controlling style is that parents/carers try to assume more knowledge than the students and so disrespect their abilities.

Group two relates to a sense of parental motivation which appears to be appreciated by students where language such as ‘push’ is used e.g.

“Sometimes they push me because they know that I am building a foundation for my future so they always tell me to strive for the best” (F.22.BBA.Child.Rkf).

Often, students appeared grateful for active controlling PIB, and again were clear in their perceptions of parental control or openness to it e.g.

“Well I guess nagging is the right word… I mean if my parents didn’t nag as much I probably wouldn’t do as much as I would have done.. I know it’s annoying but I’m glad they’re doing it” (M.17.WB.Engineering.JpM).

Surveillance systems were mentioned by three of the interviewees who used language such as ‘a fly over me’ and ‘keep track’. For Black British student Dh, there are demands to see evidence of work and surveillance of attendance. ‘Dh’ reports a very strong sense of forceful, controlling, untrusting style of parenting where work is demanded to be seen by her father. He also determines her future career path (which links to parental aspirations) with her recalling:

“He was like ‘I want you to be a nurse when you come to this country and I was like ‘I’m scared of blood!’ and I can’t be a nurse. He was like ‘I really can’t do it so you have to do

it' and I was like 'you can't force me'.. he said 'I'm not forcing you.. I'm begging you..' (laughs) 'I'm begging you to do it..' So when I came to this country and I decided to do what he wants so I did that and I've not regretted doing it… yet" (F.19.BB.Health/SocialCare.Dha)

Despite these seemingly top-down demands, Dha performs very highly in her work and appears driven by her father's motivation and enthusiasm. She reports that her father is unable to read and write (due to his lack of education and lack of opportunity) so she is fulfilling the dreams he could not complete himself. She feels motivated by his aspirations and the high values he places on education to the extent that pleasing him becomes one of the most important things to her. She also mentions that he bribes her with rewards for high grades and success and that, although she does not feel independent, she enjoys the surveillance she receives. Dha is an interesting participant because much of her experiences appear to be rooted in deep cultural/ethnic expectations (and are different to the experiences reported by the majority White British respondents) where she describes DAPSS parenting as being the norm. e.g.

"He will force you and you know how African parents are,… he will force you to do it whether you like it or not and my mum said my dad was like 'oh yeah… If I had not been strict on that one, my daughter would not be where she is'" (F.19.BB.Health/SocialCare.Dha).

This can also be traced back to the education customs in Africa, where Dha spent her early school life. She reports that students would be given a number in relation to their performance in class, where one is the highest and that she would be rewarded based on achievement. Dha actually reports that as well as feeling that her father's involvement directly contributes to her grades, she actively seeks *more* involvement from him.

DAPSS parenting was also mentioned by another highly performing student (Knf) but this was received negatively by the student who threatened to rebel. She states:

"I remember one time my mum was like trying to help me out with homework and getting me to do stuff and that kinda put me off… and it caused me to rebel and I was like no I'm not gonna do all the work anymore so I'm kinda working in a way like if my mum doesn't tell me to do it, I'll do it… and if she does I won't do it so it's like (laughs) the opposite effect!!" (F.18.WO.Health/SocialCare.Knf).

This demonstrates a clear assertion of independence where the student sets appropriate boundaries in relation to the level of PIB that they expect. In this example there is a threat of rebellion posed if the parent does not respect autonomy and independence and this clearly reflects the opposite feeling to Dha, despite them both achieving highly.

(Super-node) Emotional support

Within this super-node, there are two main nodes: Parental encouragement/showing interest and the existence of a safe place/safety net.

(Node) Parental encouragement/showing interest

Students reported that parents/carers are likely to use a number of supportive methods in encouraging college work such as questioning, listening, prompting and observing and these are likely to be in response to student need. These reinforcements are usually in the form of showing interest; the main behaviour which is said to show interest is asking questions. Students say that these gentle forms of encouragement are useful in giving them a 'push in the right direction' and, for a minority of students, positive academic outcomes are rewarded in some way or used as an incentive for hard work. Interestingly, although students recognise that parents/carers are unable to help with giving advice on many aspects of the content (due to the specialist nature of the subject), parents/carers are often willing to show encouragement by acting like a safety net in times of need, which relates to emotional support and responsiveness. Parents/carers give reinforcement or reassurance and many students voice an appreciation for the support, recognising that it is for their own good. E.g.

"*They support me… they know I have the capability to do it and sometimes I lose myself, I sometimes lose my motivation and they keep it there. They reinforce it for me. It's good to have that kind of foundation….They're doing a good job, so...(F.19.WB.Music/Drama.Yfe.G6).*

Encouragement was also seen as important in the reminder of end goals and aspirations.

(Node) Safe place/safety net

Encouragement through emotional support was also displayed through feelings of empathy and the creation of a safe place. It was also mentioned in respect to low grades:

"(low grade) I think they'd be disappointed, but not in me but for me. Like they would have known that I'd worked hard for it or they'd known that I'd put a lot of effort in…. they'd be upset for me but not angry or disappointed for me for failing" (F.20.WB.Travel/Tourism.Glo.G6).

A total of 30 percent of questionnaire responses signalled that parents/carers are always waiting to offer a support system if required by the student; many commenting that parents/carers will try to help, even if they do not know the subject. However, most of these students comment on the emotional support that can be provided, rather than the practical and use phrases like 'being there'. In most examples, the onus is on the student to request help as the parent trusts them to work independently and find support when required.

Most students who took part in the interviews identify a number of safe support systems that they believe link to higher grades. Nine students discuss emotional provision in relation to a safe place or safety net that parents/carers offer where students spoke both gratefully and passionately about this kind of support. Language such as 'listening', 'bond', 'communicate', 'close', 'reassurance' and phrases like 'asking if I'm ok' and 'just being there' were often seen. Student DI summarises this succinctly e.g.

"Literally just support, be there, listen, not judge…"(M.19.BBC.Business.Dip)

Student Bah gives an example of the close bond between herself and her mother when asked about what helps her most e.g.

"..Being there for me when I'm doing my assignment. Coz you know when you're doing an assignment sometimes you are just lost… you feel like you want to give up…. She can tell by looking at me when I'm struggling with my assignments"
(F.18.BBA.Health/SocialCare.Bah)

For students who do not have a close bond with parents/carers, students report that lecturers or tutors at college often fulfil this role and become an emotional support in times of need e.g. when asked whether she felt supported by parents/carers, peers or teachers, Kga replied:

"Teachers. Definitely. Yeah… Coz I have quite a good relationship with T (a teacher) so like I go to her with my problems and I do always talk to her and like she does gives me the advice I need where really it should be coming from my parents.. but it doesn't".
(F.26.WB.Health/SocialCare.Kga)

(Super-node) Student personal reflections of PIB

Although throughout the project, students were asked to report generally on their PIB, there were some occasions where students were asked to comment specifically on their level of satisfaction with their PIB. This idea was broached within the interview process where students commented on how they were seeking different PIB and then explained their reasons for this. The questionnaires also asked students to respond qualitatively regarding their change of PIB over time. Both these aspects are discussed below.

(Node) Seeks different PIB

For many students, assertion has been used to form an agreement on the type of PIB that is expected and which kinds of PIB the student is willing to tolerate without rebellion. Some students have not had to make these assertions where parents/carers have recognised the students' need for independence and additionally, many parents/carers allow independence

and freedom due to their inability to help their child (often through recognition that the subject content is too specific/difficult to understand without the help of an expert (i.e.lecturer)). Others, though, still appear to be in the process of reflecting on and/or communicating their views to parents/carers of what PIB they consider helpful at college. As an example, interview participant TK seeks more involvement and feels that more involvement has a direct impact on higher grades. She feels that her parents allow her independence and autonomy but she would prefer them to give her more of a push, even though she is already attaining highly. She would like her parents to extrinsically motivate her and feels that this sense of pressure should come from them to enable her to attain even more highly.

Some students sought different types of PIB but recognised the barriers that were preventing involvement. Interview participant Ba reports to have five siblings and would welcome more frequent interest and accessibility, which she sees as a barrier to her performance at college. This also relates to family structure. Likewise, interviewee Pua would like practical and economic support and again sees her father's work commitments as a barrier to her PIB. Both interviewees Jpa (moderate attainer) and Sea (high attainer) report that they are satisfied with their PIB, despite their feeling that more PIB would result in higher grades (see Table 4.9).

(Node) Change in PIB over time

In the questionnaire, responses to question twelve fall into three groups where over time, students report to have experienced:

- *Less* help or interest
- *More* help or interest
- *Different* help or interest.

A total of 35 percent of students reported that PIB had decreased over time, with some students specifically reporting that a sudden decrease in direct involvement had occurred on

enrolment at college. These students also discussed the decrease in PIB as a result of the following aspects:

- Parental lack of knowledge (due to subject)
- Parental expectations for independence
- Parental trust
- Age and responsibility
- Realisation of student motivation

A small proportion of students actually reported an increase in involvement on enrolment at college. This accounted for 8 percent of responses. A few students in this group reported that parents/carers became more involved as a result of under-performance or struggles with subject material with the idea that grades at this stage become more important for entry to university.

Ten students reported that their PIB had not necessarily changed in frequency but had changed with regard to the type of parental help received. Students reported that parents/carers were more likely to help them with providing resources, job applications, support in making life choices and able to discuss or advise students in relation to their work. This is not to say that these kinds of support were only given by a small proportion of parents; more that a small proportion of students chose to share this information.

(Super-node) Practical support

Practical support offered by parents/carers was seen to split into three aspects: economic capital, social capital and general academic competence. Economic capital refers to use of money to support students. This may be through providing transport costs, buying resources (such as paper, stationary and bigger items such as laptops) and providing accommodation/services such as shelter, clothes and food.

The majority of interviewees reported that their parents/carers were able to provide resources to support their learning at college. However, for a minority of students, they either

had to earn money to support themselves or just get by with the resources they already had such as outdated computers.

However, for students in the focus groups specifically, there was a general consensus that lack of money would not pose a barrier to attainment at college. Some students were fully financially supported by their parents/carers whereas others reported a need to find employment so that they could support themselves, although generally parents were reported to help out with travel expenses to college. Students in the focus group did not discuss financial help in relation to resources or laptops and thought that intrinsic motivation was the underlying factor for success. E.g.

"I think it depends on the person who is on the course. It doesn't matter if they've got x amount or y amount, if they're determined and they're motivated, they'll do well" (F,17,WB,Travel/Tourism,Fwz,G6).

However, one student felt pride in her responsibilities but knew that if she did need help, her mother would provide financially, including paying for a private tutor to ensure her success, which links to economic capital.

The importance of academic competence in relation to academic skills like proof reading organisation, information searching and signposting was noted by roughly 20 percent of the participants across all three research tools.

In the questionnaires a total of 41 respondents (17 percent) reported that their parents/carers were competent enough to be able to offer some kind of help or support with their college work. Of the 41, approximately 80 percent were able to help due to working or having knowledge or experience in a similar industry to that which the student was studying whilst the remaining 20 percent described that parents/carers would help by offering general support, (e.g. proof reading work) even if it is not subject-specific, and a minority reported that their parents/carers have academic skills which enabled them to offer advice.

(Super-node) Barriers

Questionnaire respondents noted a number of barriers to parental involvement which include: parental work commitments, other parental priorities, lack of specific subject knowledge, language barriers (one student reported that he spoke English to a better standard than his parents) and distance barriers (one student reported that his parents do not live in the UK). Students themselves are also acknowledged as a barrier as a small proportion of students do not allow their parents/carers to become involved in their studies (withhold knowledge of grades, do not offer assignment date information) as they attempt to assert their independence.

A total of 165 qualitative responses in the questionnaires related to low parental competence and inability to support due to the level of the course that the student was undertaking. Students across the different courses reported this as a barrier to parental involvement, although IT and engineering students in particular were most commonly represented when commenting on this obstacle over the other courses. A total of 37 respondents wrote that their parents attempted to support them in other ways (e.g. giving advice, providing positive feedback and offering emotional support), despite lack of knowledge e.g.

"My knowledge exceeded that of my Mum so she supported me emotionally but not educationally" (M,19,WB,OE,Tod)

Six focus group students discussed the barrier created by subject specialisms and lack of parental knowledge in these areas. Five students stated that parents would have no idea of the work because they were not present during the lessons. They were clear, however, that parents often found other ways to help if necessary. Parents with lower subject knowledge can offer other strategies of support such as an 'emotional safety net' (see earlier discussion). The most common form of help was encouragement by showing interest through asking questions. However, a minority of students claimed that their parents failed to make themselves accessible.

A total of 11 out of 16 interviewees report their parents to have low parental competence. When student Jp2 was asked what parents could do to help, the student said:

"Be intelligent.. because if they know what you're doing and stuff then they can help you but if they don't know then.. it's not really helpful.. you can't get your parents to help you with algebra if they can't even do simple sums… they can't help you with Pythagoras theorem if they can't even do their times table….I sometimes think if she did get involved I might end up with lower grades!" (PNS,21,WB,IT,JP2)

This reported parental inability to support in education has been current throughout the student's whole educational experience. When asked how the student's mother helped with education when younger the student replied,

"walking to school…. I can't remember that much." (PNS,21,WB,IT,JP2)

However, the remaining five interviewees identified that their parents had competence, either in the specific subject (for three students) or that they valued their opinions or skills. One student (Seh) reported that his father had taught him English and that this had allowed him to succeed.

Interviewees also identify a range of barriers to parental support which builds on those found in the questionnaires but highlights the barrier of negative relationships between parents and their children. Most of these are things that the student may have little control over, since relationships are bi-directional. Even student assertion of boundaries is dependent upon the responsiveness of the parents/carers involved, including their values, expectations and aspirations for their children. Reported barriers can be summarised as:

- weak relationships between student and parent
- lack of accessibility of parents due to employment commitments/stress/tiredness or siblings/other dependents/other greater priorities
- Lack of money or resources

- Lack of subject knowledge or skills to help student
- Family problems/bereavements
- Student assertion of boundaries

(Theme) Relationships

Students reported a mix of relationships with parents/carers. However, the majority were close and supportive where parents made every effort to help, even if they could not offer specific subject advice:

"Well I'm very family orientated so they are very helpful and they haven't got an engineering background but they try and help whenever they can.. coz like they always ask me if I need private tuition or something so that's fairly helpful" (M,17,WB,Engineering,Kah)

However, a minority of students reported weak or absent relationships, such as interviewee participant Kgh:

"Well I've never really had a relationship with them… like not just like with that (college work) but personal.. we've never really had that family relationship. So yeah I've always just done things on my own really..." (F.26.WB.Heath/Socialcare,Kgh)

Some students reported that role modelling (developed through positive relationships) had an influence on their studies at college. Just under a third of interviewees mention the encouraging nature of parental role models in a positive light. However, in most cases role modelling is mentioned where it relates to students who have seen their parents/carers work hard (often in difficult circumstances) and have great respect for this. This contributes to their motivation to also work hard and do well. Some students also mention that following in their parents' footsteps will result in pleasing or making their parents proud.

(Theme) Culture/Ethnic factors

Three students make reference to the expectations of their culture and ethnicity. One is a Black British female (Dha) and two are Asian British females (Rma and Tma). Rma and Tma

discuss their position in the family as a supporter and source of guidance for younger siblings where their life decisions are being noted as they act as positive role models and suggest that it is a cultural expectation that the oldest female sibling is looked up to and also takes on a 'mothering' role for their younger family. Tma appears to have a positive perception of her role in the family. However, Rma has a clear negative view of her role as she feels overwhelmed and frustrated at her mother's inability and unwillingness to help her siblings. She states:

"because everyone looks up to me but it frustrates me so much.. because it's just like, 'just go ask Mum' I can't say that, like 'go ask Mum' coz she won't know dya know what I mean? and like my brothers, well especially the youngest one, he comes to me for everything.. whether it's financial support, educational support, physical support.. he'd always comes to me but I think that's because.. coz I physically brought him up myself .. ever since he was young.. he kinda trusts me a lot more than my Mum coz of the fact I've helped him so much through education.. and I think my Mum's just pushed him to the side to say, you know I'm no help, go ask your sister…" (F,18,ABB,Health/SocialCare,Rma)

Rma also refers to family honour and in the full interview, describes a situation where she has been emotionally abandoned by her parents – particularly her father. This student was looked after by the state for nine months but at the time of interviewing, she was living back with her parents.

She reports:

"I'm basically a looked after child so like in my culture it's a thing that doesn't happen often so they, like they don't.. I'm not like their favourite child, I guess"

She describes a very difficult relationship with her father due to an incident which resulted in family shame. She states:

"My dad is against me like living at the house.. so…. it is SO awkward. Coz he's in the other room and I'll be walking and he'll just look at me and then walk away and go in the other direction, it's just so awkward..!"

The other Asian interviewee compares her family to the generalised cultural expectations and describes how she has choices and autonomy:

"Mostly Asian parents want their kids to go to university and like to have a good job, like be a good job like a doctor or something like that but my parents are more laid back in that way. They don't mind what we do. So it's our choice and we can decide what we want to do" (F,20,ABB,Travel/Tourism,Tma)

As mentioned previously, student Dha describes herself as Black British and appears to assume that all African parents use top-down strict parenting approaches due to the pressures placed on students by school ranking systems in Ghana. This links to the DAPSS PIB. Family pride also appears to play a part here as she describes her main motivation is to impress her father and gain his pride.

4.2.1.2 (Super-theme) BTEC college/course factors

The super-theme of 'BTEC college/course factors' was discussed much less than the super-theme of 'Parents/family/home life factors' with perceptions mainly relating to the influences of lecturer support on attainment and the barriers created through specialised skills/language/knowledge that relate to different courses.

Firstly, however, enrolment at college was seen to be linked to independence and freedom where students noted the differences between college and school 6th forms. E.g.

"Kids at college feel they are independent because they are at college. It's different if you're at sixth form - you're in a different environment. Whereas college, it's a very independent place to be…" (F,17,WB,Music/drama,Fie,G8)

Most students appeared to have two support sources where they relied on parents/carers for emotional support and prompts/motivation, but on lecturers for specific understanding and support in relation to the level 3 course where specialist skills or knowledge were required. This was noted as a barrier to many students where parents/carers attempted to help in a variety of ways but were often unable to engage with supporting aspects of the course content. However, as well as using lecturers/tutors to guide specialist skills and subject knowledge, a minority of students felt the need to involve lecturers in their thoughts, motivations and career aspirations where these conversations and support mechanisms were not evident at home. Lecturer knowledge and support was mentioned 20 times during the interviews and included aspects of support in relation to: guidance for careers, motivation, advice, life lessons, role models and trust. In addition, where parents/carers are not seen to be emotionally supportive of students and/or are reported to have negative values and attitudes to education or weak relationships with their children, students rely or communicate with members of staff and use them as an emotional safety net in times of need.

4.2.2. Intrinsic motivation

The hierarchy of Intrinsic Motivation included two super-themes. These were ‘Student aspirations’ and ‘student attitudes’.

Student aspirations included the following themes:

- ‘competition with parents’
- ‘Lifestyle choices’
- ‘career drive’
- ‘attainment drive’
- ‘support current or future family/dependents’

Student attitudes included the themes of:

- Pride

- Educational Values
- Opportunity
- Performance confusion or frustration
- Expectations

As with the extrinsic data, there exists a wealth of information and it was not possible to discuss every single node for intrinsic motivation. When considering the different aspects of intrinsic motivation it is likely that elements of extrinsic factors have influenced intrinsic motivation in some way. Although the hierarchy of extrinsic motivation has more nodes and themes than the intrinsic hierarchy, intrinsic motivation may be viewed as having more influence on student attainment. This will be referred to in more detail in Chapter Five. The perceptions seen to be of most importance/relevance for students in relation to intrinsic motivation span across nodes, super-nodes, themes and super-themes and are discussed below. They are linked to expectations, attitudes and aspirations (see Figure 4.3: Hierarchy of Intrinsic Motivation) including:

- Ownership for learning
- Age/stage related expectations
- Student assertion
- Student pride
- Student aspirations.

4.2.2.1 (Super-theme) Student ownership for learning

The idea (node) of 'Ownership for learning' was seen to be one of the most important perceptions that students held. This was under the super-node of 'independence at college' and within the theme of 'expectations' and was found to link with other nodes such as choices, responsibility, privacy and freedom. Most of the questionnaire qualitative comments relating to intrinsic motivation specifically refer to 'ownership for learning'. This node was mentioned 78 times within the questionnaire responses (accounting for 32 percent of

students) and was by far the most frequently mentioned topic. Ownership for learning was seen to be underpinned by age and responsibility e.g.

"I am older so I need to make my own decisions about working hard. Even though my parents can guide me, it is my decision".(M.18.ABB.IT.Drl)

'Ownership for learning' was also associated with freedom, choices and independence. There was also a real sense that ownership for learning involves a trust in students to learn from mistakes and take responsibility. However, within this node, students again referred to their knowledge of the parental safety net where support would be readily available, should they request it. Ownership for learning was also linked to lack of parental knowledge where students took ownership because they did not want to rely on parents/carers for incorrect information or unhelpful suggestions. This finding was also seen across the focus group discussions where students felt the drive to take responsibility for their work and make their own decisions. It was also found to be linked to future aspirations, as the quote below suggests:

"I feel that like it makes me work harder because it's for myself it's for my future, not for my parents' future so, it's like me leading and choosing what to do is better…" (F,19,WB,Travel/Tourism,Gef,G6)

4.2.2.2 (Super-theme) Student age related/stage related expectations

Age and related expectations for autonomy and independence underpinned much of the focus group discussions. This topic is also weaved throughout the questionnaire and interview data and appears to feature often when students are expressing their feelings of responsibility and preparation for next steps (i.e. university or the world of work).

Most students saw themselves as decision makers and appreciated gaining control in life choices. They saw college as an independent place to be. Although students appreciated the 'safety net' provided by their parents/carers, they also realised that they needed to exert

their independence because they were leading up to being an adult and saw their years at college as a preparation. E.g.

"I guess I'm old enough to take responsibility into my own hands because in like 2 years' time you will be moving out and you will have responsibility start to build up and so it's better to have a head start before you go out in the real world" (M,17,WB,Sports,Nah,G5).

Age therefore appears to be a motivator for independence. A close relationship over a period of time was also seen to support parental trust for autonomy and student choices. Here one student discusses choices in PIB with student age:

"*I think it's safe to say we are all at an age now where the parenting style has stuck now. They've gone through trying different methods and we're young adults now. Yeah I think they've kind of made the decision, this is the method that works with my son or daughter. They know the person…" (M,20,WO,Music/Drama,Pod,G8).*

Many students referred to age stating that parental trust was associated with the wider expectations for individuals who have reached a certain age. Age was seen to drive independence, where students asserted their position.

4.2.2.3 (Super-theme) Student assertion

Age related independence and ownership also link to the idea of student assertion, where students communicate their view of how much or what kinds of PIB they require and comment on the 'responsiveness' of their parents/carers. This was seen across all research tools. Some students appeared more forceful in their want of independence and suggested frustration with parental involvement in some way. E.g.

"I wouldn't let them get more involved because it would be a hassle"

(M.20.WB.OutdoorEd,Kio)

Student assertion was also linked with a want of privacy. Moodle surveillance (a system where parents/carers can access information and grades achieved by students) was often

controlled by students where they reported to have not allowed their parents the password to this, showing links with want of independence. E.g.

"They know what I tell them" (M.18.WB.OutdoorEd,Lor).

4.2.2.4 (Super-theme) Student pride

Intrinsic motivation was connected to student pride and a sense of accomplishment. Students felt satisfied when they gained outcomes that had been a result of their independent hard work. When there was a deliberation over courses and an assertion of student choice, there were also occasions where students wanted to verify their skills and motivation, demonstrate they had made the right decisions and enjoyed parental pride of their attainment.

4.2.2.5 (Super-theme) Student aspirations

Aspirations referred to the things that students are motivated to do. This node was associated with values of education, reassurance, happiness, the want of money and particular lifestyles and expectations across research tools. Motivation was again seen to be central to supporting student aspirations. E.g.

"*I made the decision to come here and do this course and stuff I feel like I'm more motivated to actually do well and I'm enjoying it so I think it's good that we're in control of our future" (F.17.BB.Travel/Tourism.Mit,G6)*

In over 80 percent of cases, student aspirations were a reflection of their parents' aspirations. Even general aspirations with respect to values of education and achieving highly were communicated to students and conceived to create a sense of intrinsic drive. Interviewee Dha describes her reflection of her father's feelings in guiding her motivation e.g.

"So for education he is really into it and that motivates me to…to just not to let him down.. coz he didn't get this chance that I've got now. Yeah so I have to make good use of it and not to disappoint him". (F.19.BB.Health/Socialcare,Dha)

4.2.3. Comparison of themes across research tools (triangulation)

Although the questions asked by each research tool were different (and so a different focus was evident in student responses) common ideas did appear to weave throughout all sets of research data as shown by Table 4.2. Nodes and sub-nodes (where appropriate) are seen in the left-hand column as they were described in the initial thematic analysis. The focus group, questionnaire and interview columns show how these findings (coloured – see key) appear to integrate across research tools where each theme is highlighted by a different colour. For clarity, see the hierarchies of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Figures 4.2 and 4.3) and refer to the key code below. Table 4.2 on the following page does not include *all* the influences in the hierarchies but identifies some of the *most commonly* occurring themes/super-nodes/nodes.

This review of data is particularly important as it suggests that although certain topics were not specifically referred to by the researcher, the same themes/super-nodes/nodes presented themselves when data were collected using different methods and at different times throughout the academic year (i.e. they were perceived as important/central/significant to students at numerous points in time).

Table 4.2: Qualitative themes across research tools

Key: colour codes		
Factor	**Theme**	**Super-node/nodes/sub-nodes**
Extrinsic Motivation	PIB (blue/light purple)	Parental values and attitudes (age/stage related expectations, trust, aspirations, responsiveness, respect for autonomy and independence)
		Parental Practical Support (Parent may or may not help financially or with proof reading, prompting or giving advice, creating suitable spaces for learning)
		Parent unable to give advice on subject knowledge/academic skills
		Parental emotional support (encouragement, showing interest, motivating, safe place/safety net, reassurance)
		Barriers (family problems, parental work commitments)
		Reflections on PIB over time
		DAPSS
	Peers and academic staff (brown/orange)	Competition
		Knowledge, support, advice
	Ethnicity (green)	Asian
		Black
	Relationships (red)	Positive
		Absent, weak or negative
Intrinsic motivation	Student attitudes (expectations and values) (pink)	Independence (freedom, choices, privacy, responsibility, ownership for learning, rebellion and assertion)
		Age related/stage related
	Student aspirations (greys)	Career/future life
		Attainment

Main nodes/sub-nodes	Focus Groups	Questionnaires	Interviews
Independence and ownership for learning (student)	Freedom, choices, responsibility, age/stage *intrinsic motivation*	Age/stage, responsibility *intrinsic motivation*	*Intrinsic motivation*, age/stage, responsibility, choices preparation for the future
Respect for student autonomy (parents)	Independence, freedom, choices, *intrinsic motivation*	Responsibility, preparation for university or world of work, choices, parental trust, age,	flexibility, trust, space, freedom, learning from mistakes, age/stage

		knowledge of students' *intrinsic motivation*	expectations and high previous grades
Intrinsic (student) and extrinsic (parent) motivation	Independence, freedom, choices, autonomy (intrinsic), reinforcements, prompts, asking questions, *extrinsic motivation*	Ownership for learning, age/stage, responsibility *intrinsic motivation*	*Intrinsic*: Autonomy age *Extrinsic*: showing interest, asking questions, prompts, listening, praising, discussion of careers, rewards for achievement
Responsiveness	Emotional support Encouragement Safety net	Provides help only if asked (respect for autonomy) Parental trust	*Extrinsic motivation* Safe place/safety net Parent flexibility with time/support Parental trust
Economic capital, (accommodation / services/ resources)	Lack of money should not stop success, lack of money can drive motivation	Resources	Resources Travel expenses Cooking meals Accommodation
Student assertion by boundary setting	Rebellion	An assertion that if parent interfered student would not want to do the work (student control)	Rebellion, agreed amount of PIB (student control)
Practical support (proof reading/organisation/offering ideas)	Information searching Organisation	Offering ideas and asking questions, proof reading	Hands on approaches: proof reading, organisation, offering opinions and ideas
DAPSS	lack of freedom, choices and privacy, surveillance methods, lack of ownership	Stress, pressure, parents assume more knowledge, push, can motivate student	Forceful, controlling, untrusting, surveillance, determines career path (one student accepts this

			and wants to please parent and relates it to her ethnicity, another threatens to rebel and so parent is responsive to this request)
Values for education and role modelling	Parental interest in outcomes Surveillance Checking attendance Parental aspirations which can feed into student aspirations and influence *motivation*	General encouragement for student success on the course, although a small proportion of students think parents do not care	Surveillance Parental prompts Parental interest and questions Discussion of future careers
Aspirations and expectations	Values for education Reassurance Happiness *Intrinsic and extrinsic Motivation* Want of money and lifestyle Age/stage	*Motivation (extrinsic and intrinsic)* Reassurance Age Lifestyles and money	*Motivation (extrinsic and intrinsic)* Parental aspirations are seen to drive student aspirations as a form of extrinsic motivation Students aspire to gain certain kinds of employment, support a family or future family, have a comfortable lifestyle
Positive Parental encouragement	Prompts, showing interest, asking questions, safety net, emotional support, reassurance	Prompts, showing interest, emotional support, safety net, reinforcement, empathy, responsiveness	When parents do not offer encouragement, it can come from lecturers/tutors instead. Role modelling *Extrinsic motivation*:

			showing interest, asking questions, prompts, listening, praising
Age, stage of education and related expectations	Student choice and autonomy, student assumes more knowledge than parent, *intrinsic motivation* independence, preparation for university and future life	Independence Autonomy Responsibility Preparation for university/the future	flexibility, trust, space, freedom, learning from mistakes
Low/high parental subject competence	No subject knowledge but would help in other ways – asking questions and giving emotional support	Reassurance Signposting Minority had subject knowledge – so helped in other ways using emotional support	Most parents had low competence. Minority had subject knowledge – so helped in other ways using skills or ideas or emotional support
Parent attitude to student outcomes	Trust in student, gives them the motivation to 'try again'	responsibility, autonomy, age, student choices, trust and expectations Grades not shared Gentle encouragement (more likely than pressured approaches)	Top down approach by one parent in relation to DAPSS parenting and the attainment of high grades (Dh).
Change in PIB over time	College has different expectations to school. Students seek independence.	Divided into 3 categories: less help, more help or different kinds of help. Also relates to: Parental lack of knowledge (due to subject)	One student (Dh) mentioned that PIB had become slightly less hands on and less pressured.

		Parental expectations for independence Parental trust Age/college stage and responsibility Realisation of student motivation	
Academic staff – knowledge and support and peers	Lecturers would support more than parents (mentioned by a minority of students) Peers' influence – want to out-perform others	Lecturers would be a port of call due to knowledge and support they provide	Used as an emotional safety net Used also for prompts and motivation Peers important - competition Used to talk about aspirations and pathways, A source of advice
Parental trust	Respect for autonomy and independence Expectations and aspirations Age expectations motivation	Attitudes to outcomes and PIB Autonomy More trust developed over time Students with little or no support due to trust Safe place/safety net *Intrinsic motivation*	Responsiveness Autonomy and independence
Barriers to PIB	Low parental subject competence Student assertion of acceptable boundaries (student ownership for learning)	Parental work commitments, other parental priorities (siblings), lack of specific subject knowledge,	weak relationships between student and parent lack of accessibility of parents due to employment commitments/

	Not sharing grades with parents Not allowing parents to have password for parent portal	language barriers and distance barriers, Not sharing grades with parents	stress/ tiredness or siblings/other dependents/other greater priorities Lack of money or resources Lack of subject knowledge or skills to help student Family problems/bereavements Student assertion of boundaries
Little or no support	Absent interest – detached from student Disagreement with pathway – negative relationship Acceptance of independence and ownership	Independence due to age /stage and student expectations Autonomy due to lack of parental knowledge of level 3 subject content	Student assertion of boundaries and levels of PIB Weak relationships Parental barriers – lack of knowledge or lack of time/other priorities/work commitments
Safe place/safety net	Trust that student will ask when needed Emotional support and responsiveness	Emotional support – even if parents lack subject knowledge	Reassurance Listening Responsiveness Role taken on by lecturers/tutors if not given by parents.
Ethnicity and culture	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Mentioned in respect to role modelling and expectations, family honour/pride (Asian students) and forceful parenting practices where pressure and comparison

			is used as a motivator (Black student)

As has been noted in the hierarchies of motivation, most of the themes, nodes and sub-nodes appear to interlink in some way.

The main findings for this comparative tool are:

1) Both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation underpinned and associated with many other themes.
2) Age, college stage, a need for independence, autonomy to make choices and trust were seen as key central themes and students appeared to feel strongly about these.
3) Students acknowledged the idea of 'responsiveness' where parents would only help when asked and formed a safety net/safe space in which to nurture or emotionally support their children.
4) Some students reported to be completely independent in their work, only relying on parents/carers for food and shelter, whereas others noted the emotional support offered by parents/carers in the form of gentle encouragement through asking questions, prompting students, giving advice or motivating them to work hard.
5) Students who felt overwhelmed with their PIB may have asserted boundaries to ensure they felt ownership for their work and educational achievements. This is also evident for students who report not to share their grades with parents/carers to gain control. Students who did not feel respected by their parents/carers in this domain were likely to be seen to rebel (or at least threaten to rebel).
6) Due to the nature of subject specific level 3 content at college, students reported that many parents/carers felt they could not help practically due to lack of knowledge. This also related to change in PIB over time, where parents/carers had encouraged independence at college for this reason. However, some parents/carers used general

skills, such as proof reading to help students along with emotional support and reassuring communication.

7) Many students recognised that parents had inspired them to work hard and had discussed career paths. For a minority of students whose parents had not discussed future roles, there was a reliance on the lecturers/tutors at college to provide this support and provide external motivation.
8) A minority of students reported parents to be completely disinterested in their work; for the majority it was clear that the students had strong positive relationships with their parents. However, interviews were the main research tool to highlight those who experienced weak or strained relationships as it allowed students to express themselves more fully than for the other research tools. In the questionnaires a minority of students identified that parents 'did not care' about their studies but this attitude cannot be presumed to relate to all other aspects of their life.
9) The interviews allowed for a greater variety of barriers to parental involvement to be explored which may have been due to the opportunity for deep discussion in a one-to-one situation.
10) Ethnicity and culture were not specifically referred to in the focus groups or questionnaires but became apparent during detailed discussion in the interviews but are only seen as influential by a minority of students.

As can be seen above, there is a complex structure for the way in which themes appear to relate across each research tool. To understand the above more clearly, visualisation techniques have been used below.

4.2.4 Shared values or a discrepancy between college and student?

Research Question one asked whether students perceive certain aspects of PIB to be helpful or important in relation to their attainment. It also sought to understand whether the views of Ofsted, the college and the student collide or share similar ideas.

Table 4.3 (below) has been created to show shared values and discrepancy between Ofsted, college prospectus, college policy and student views.

Table 4.3 Shared values and discrepancies

Ofsted	Prospectus	Written policy and views of the DQS (Policy maker)	Themes collected from the majority of students
Parents are kept informed by the provider of each learner's attendance, progress and improvement. Where appropriate, parents are provided with clear and timely information that details the extent of learners' progress in relation to the standards expected	Directed at students: Achieve your dreams. Students are encouraged to become mature and independent learners.	Policy The college must work with parents of full-time students in order to seek their support in maximising achievement. DQS The college needs to engage with parents so that students can be supported (DQS) There must be parental involvement but there's a number of ways you can do that. Encouragement and expectation for parents to supervise their children to carry out 12 hours a week of study outside of lessons Students must be reminded about assignments and surveillance techniques should be used. Parents must push students to do the best they can Support from parents = higher grades	**Unhelpful/negatively perceived behaviours:** Surveillance (if not coupled with gentle encouragement) Nagging Control and dis-trust Pressure Parents may assume knowledge (but in reality, do not have the subject knowledge or skills to help students) **Helpful/positively perceived behaviours:** Student ownership for work increases intrinsic motivation Parental trust Showing interest/encouragement by asking general questions about how the student is Emotional support: empathy and making gentle suggestions The feeling of a safety net and 'being there' if requested by the student Parental responsiveness and respect

Table 4.3 shows that there are mainly differing views between the different parties but some shared values are included. The college prospectus is wholly reflective of themes that were collected from student responses and so is likely to be effective in terms of advertising and attracting students who mirror similar views about independence and autonomy at FE level of study. However, Ofsted and the views of the DQS largely contradict the majority of the main themes collected from analysing qualitative student responses. The DQS suggests imposing surveillance methods on students saying they should be encouraged or supervised to carry out twelve hours of study time outside lessons, which is largely opposed when reviewing student perceptions regarding this type of PIB. It is clear from Table 4.3 that student views reflect what is published in the prospectus but are largely different to those communicated by Ofsted and the policy maker at the college. These differences are analysed in more depth in section 5.1 of the discussion chapter.

4.3 Research question two

Research question two sought to find associations between different items (PIB reported by students) and attainment (see section 3.1.1). It did this using both quantitative and qualitative data. The section is split into two main parts based on data type. Section 4.3.1 focuses on quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires. Section 4.3.2 looks at themes gathered in the interview process which specifically questioned students on their attainment and looked for links between PIB and attainment.

4.3.1 Quantitative data

4.3.1.1. PIB statements and attainment

This section presents the percentage distributions of students' responses to PIB statements in Table 4.4. The same table indicates the significant values by use of an asterisk (*), where values are less than 0.05. The significance values indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in attainment in relation to students' responses for those items (see Chapter Three) and relates to some DAPSS behaviours (pressure, lack of trust and

autonomy) and some PAPSS behaviours (trust and respect) as well as expectations and aspirations (NEAV and PEAV). The relationships between these statements and attainment are explained more fully underneath Table 4.4 to offer a greater insight. Appendix O shows these relationships visually. Note that in Table 4.4, ‘SA’ stands for ‘Strongly Agree’, ‘A’ stands for ‘Agree’, ‘D’ stands for ‘Disagree’ and ‘SD’ stands for ‘Strongly Disagree’.

Table 4.4: The percentage distributions for responses to statements and significance in relation to attainment

	Statements	SA	A	Neither A or D	D	SD	Significant values for attainment
DAPSS	a: "My parents/carers like to be in control of the amount and/or quality of college work that I do"	**1.7%**	**10.0%**	**32.9%**	**28.8%**	**26.7%**	
	b: "I rely on my parents/carers to manage and help me with coursework"	**0.8%**	**3.3%**	**11.3%**	**35.4%**	**49.2%**	
	c: "My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have not asked them to"	**3.3%**	**11.3%**	**12.1%**	**30.8%**	**42.5%**	
	d: "My parents/carers believe they know more than me about how I should be doing my college work"	**5.8%**	**15.8%**	**12.9%**	**27.5%**	**37.9%**	$X^2(2) = 10.299$, $p = 0.036$*
	e: "I sometimes feel pressurised by my parents/carers to do college work when I do not really want to"	**5.4%**	**10.0%**	**13.3%**	**34.2%**	**37.1%**	$X^2(2) = 15.914$, $p = 0.003$*
	f: "My parents/carers do not really trust me to get on with my work myself"	**3.3%**	**6.7%**	**14.2%**	**30.8%**	**45.0%**	$X^2(2) = 14.225$, $p = 0.007$*
	g: "My parents/carers make choices about my work"	**2.5%**	**3.8%**	**12.1%**	**33.8%**	**47.9%**	$X^2(2) = 18.731$, $p = 0.001$*
PAPSS	a: "My parents/carers gently encourage me to complete my work for college"	**16.7%**	**45.0%**	**21.3%**	**7.9%**	**9.2%**	
	b: "If I am struggling, my parents/carers will try to guide me in my college work"	**15.4%**	**38.3%**	**26.3%**	**9.6%**	**10.4%**	
	c: "My parents/carers are willing to talk about my college work, rather than getting involved with essay writing"	**10.4%**	**45.4%**	**21.7%**	**11.3%**	**11.3%**	
	d: "My parents/carers believe that I know as much as them about how to get on with my work"	**49.2%**	**32.9%**	**9.6%**	**3.8%**	**4.6%**	
	e: "I choose when and how to do my college work"	**27.9%**	**36.7%**	**22.5%**	**7.9%**	**5.0%**	
	f: "My parents/carers trust me to do college work myself"	**47.1%**	**33.3%**	**12.9%**	**4.2%**	**2.5%**	$X^2(2) = 11.743$, $p = 0.019$*
	g: "My parents/carers respect my choices when it comes to college work"	**39.6%**	**36.7%**	**16.3%**	**3.3%**	**4.2%**	$X^2(2) = 13.918$, $p = 0.008$*
NEAV	a: "My parents/carers are not sure how well I will do at college"	**5.9%**	**15.5%**	**28.6%**	**34.9%**	**15.1%**	$X^2(2) = 24.407$, $p = 0.000$*
	b: "My parents/carers are unsure whether I will succeed in education"	**4.6%**	**6.7%**	**20.2%**	**42.0%**	**26.5%**	$X^2(2) = 26.933$, $p = 0.000$*
	c: "My parents/carers do not have particular aspirations for what job I get"	**6.3%**	**23.9%**	**32.8%**	**23.9%**	**13.0%**	
	d: "My parents/carers do not think education is particularly important"	**0.4%**	**0.4%**	**9.2%**	**30.3%**	**59.7%**	
	e: "I do not place great importance on my education"	**0.4%**	**2.5%**	**16.0%**	**37.4%**	**43.7%**	
PEAV	a: "My parents/carers expect me to do well at college"	**43.7%**	**44.1%**	**9.2%**	**2.1%**	**0.8%**	
	b: "My parents/carers have always known that I would succeed in education"	**17.2%**	**38.2%**	**35.7%**	**6.3%**	**2.5%**	$X^2(2) = 12.103$, $p = 0.017$*
	c: "My parents/carers have inspired me to work hard so I can get the job that I want"	**30.3%**	**43.3%**	**20.2%**	**2.5%**	**3.8%**	$X^2(2) = 11.211$, $p = 0.024$*
	d: "My parents/carers think it is important to get a good education"	**56.7%**	**34.5%**	**7.6%**	**0.4%**	**0.8%**	
	e: "I value a good education"	**55.0%**	**38.7%**	**5.5%**	**0.4%**	**0.4%**	

Below, each of the ten statements which produced a statistically significant outcome is explained.

***DAPSS* d: "My parents/carers believe they know more than me about how I should be doing my work":**

A total of 65 percent of students either 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the statement. However, although students who 'strongly disagreed' had a higher average outcome than the other categories, students who disagreed had lower average outcomes than those who 'neither agreed nor disagreed' or 'agreed' with the statement. This suggests that students may have misunderstood the statement, as there is no logical pattern for responses and average grades for this statement and therefore the significance value is of little value for understanding the relationship between responses and attainment and so was disregarded.

DAPSS e: "I sometimes feel pressurised by my parents/carers to do college work when I do not really want to":

A total of 71 percent of students either 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the statement and these students gain higher average outcomes than those who 'agree' or 'strongly agree'.

DAPSS f: "My parents/carers do not trust me to get on with work myself":

A total of 76 percent of students either 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the statement. Students who 'strongly disagree' have higher average outcomes than those who 'strongly agree'. The difference between these average outcomes is 100 UCAS points. However, a very small group of students (7 percent of total respondents) who 'agree' with this statement and have slightly higher average outcomes than those who 'disagree' with it (a difference of 9 UCAS points). Nevertheless, the general trend is that more disagreement is linked with higher average outcomes, despite this minority group.

DAPSS g: "My parents/carers make choices about my work":

A total of 82 percent of students either ‘strongly disagree’ or ‘disagree’ with the statement. Students who selected ‘strongly disagree’ have the highest average outcomes compared to all other responses and is also chosen as the most frequent response. However, as with the above statement, a minority of students who ‘strongly agree’ (2.6 percent) have higher average outcomes than those who ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’.

PAPSS f: “My parents/carers trust me to do college work myself”:

Students who ‘strongly agreed’ with this statement (47 percent) had the highest average outcomes compared to all other response categories. Students who ‘agreed’ with the statement (33 percent) had higher average outcomes than those who ‘disagreed’ (4 percent) and those who ‘strongly disagreed’ (3 percent) had the lowest average outcome values.

PAPSS g: “My parents/carers respect my choices when it comes to college work”

Students who report agreement with parental respect (both ‘strongly agree’ – 40 percent and ‘agree’ – 37 percent) have higher average outcomes and those students who ‘strongly disagree’ (4 percent) have the lowest average outcomes. However, again there appears to be a minority group of students who ‘disagree’ that their choices are respected and yet they gain higher average outcomes than those students who ‘agree’ (these account for 3 percent of the total respondents).

NEAV a: “My parents/carers are not sure how well I will do at college”

Students who showed disagreement (50 percent) had higher average outcomes than those who ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ (21 percent).

NEAV b: “My parents/carers are unsure whether I will succeed in education”

Students who selected ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ with the statement (69 percent) gained higher average UCAS points than those who ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ (11 percent).

PEAV b: “My parents/carers have always known that I would succeed in education”

Students who showed agreement with this statement gained more UCAS points on average than those who did not. Students who ‘strongly disagreed’ with this statement (2.5 percent) gained the lowest average outcomes.

PEAV c: “My parents/carers have inspired me to work hard so I can get the job that I want”.

The majority of students (72 percent) either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with this statement. Those who ‘disagree’, or ‘neither agree nor disagree’, do significantly less well in terms of outcomes in comparison with those who ‘strongly agree’. There are a small group of students (in this case 4 percent of the total students who responded to this question) who ‘strongly disagree’ with this statement and yet appear to outperform the average score for those students who ‘agree’ with this statement. Due to the small size of this minority group, it can still be considered that the general recognised trend is that having inspiration for certain jobs is associated with higher average outcomes, but that some students are able to perform highly and not associate their grades with high parental aspirations.

4.3.1.2 Course, gender, knowledge of mother's achievements and attainment (UCAS points)

Table 4.5 shows that there were three additional factors that linked with attainment to produce a statistically significant outcome. These were course, gender and students' knowledge of mother's academic achievements.

Table 4.5: Subject area, gender, knowledge of mother's academic achievements and attainment

Additional Factors	Result	Test
Course	$X^2(2) = 25.790$, $p = 0.004$*	Kruskal-Wallis
Knowledge of mother's academic achievements	$U = 4{,}341.5$, $p = 0.005$*	Mann-Whitney
Gender	$U = 6{,}544.5$, $p = 0.027$*	

Note that aspects of cultural capital as measured in this study (which related to highest level of education for both parents, as displayed in Table 4.5a and 4.5b, below) did not relate to attainment.

Table 4.5a: Mother's Highest Educational Accomplishments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	less than 4 GCSEs A-C	27	11.3	12.1	12.1
	More than 4 GCSEs A-C	16	6.7	7.1	19.2
	3 or more A levels	32	13.3	14.3	33.5
	HNC level 4	19	7.9	8.5	42.0
	HND level 5	8	3.3	3.6	45.5
	A degree qual level 6	1	.4	.4	46.0
	A masters qual level 7	3	1.3	1.3	47.3
	I do not know	118	49.2	52.7	100.0
	Total	224	93.3	100.0	
Missing	-99	16	6.7		
Total		240	100.0		

Table 4.5b: Father's Highest Educational Accomplishments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	less than 4 GCSEs A-C	29	12.1	14.7	14.7
	More than 4 GCSEs A-C	20	8.3	10.2	24.9
	3 or more A levels	12	5.0	6.1	31.0
	HNC level 4	14	5.8	7.1	38.1
	HND level 5	1	.4	.5	38.6
	A degree qual level 6	13	5.4	6.6	45.2
	PhD level 8	2	.8	1.0	46.2
	I do not know	106	44.2	53.8	100.0
	Total	197	82.1	100.0	
Missing	-99	43	17.9		
Total		240	100.0		

'Subject area': Health and Social care students had the highest average UCAS score, followed by Construction, Outdoor Education and Business (see Table 4.6 below and also Table 4.1 which also gives information by course). There were a group of subject areas with very similar average scores (between 233 and 251) which were Performing Arts, Visual Arts, IT, Sport, Engineering and Public Services. Travel and Tourism had the lowest average score of 204. The difference between the average score for Health and Social Care and Travel and Tourism was 142 UCAS points. UCAS points for Childcare students were not available. See Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Average UCAS points for different BTEC subject areas:

Course	Average UCAS points
Engineering	239
Construction	304
Health and Social Care	346
IT	242
Public Services	233
Sport	240
Business	274
Outdoor education	298
Travel and Tourism	204
Visual arts	243
Performing arts	251

Mother's academic achievement:

Students who knew about their **mother's academic achievements** gained a statistically significant higher average grade than those who did not know. The difference in average grades was 39 UCAS points. Just less than half of students (47 percent) reported knowledge of their mother's academic achievements and 53 percent reported that they did not know. These findings are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Average UCAS points for student knowledge of mother's academic achievement

Response to Qu. 3 of the questionnaire	Percentage	Average UCAS points
Reported knowledge of mother's academic achievement	47%	281.82
Ticked box which stated 'I do not know the answer to this question'	53%	242.83

Gender: The difference in the average score between males and females was 34 UCAS points where female students gained higher average scores than male students (see Table 4.8 below).

Table 4.8: Average UCAS points for gender

Gender	Average UCAS points
Male	250
Female	284

It is important to identify here that gender and course may have associations which create these significance values since 22 out of 23 students studying Health and Social Care were female.

4.3.1.3. Summary

1) There was a significant difference between the average outcomes gained for different courses. The differences could not be attributed to the amount of practical or

theoretical content. As an example, Health and Social Care (mostly theoretical) and Construction (mostly practical) were courses that had the highest average grades, but theory and practice is structured according to the subject/trade disciplines.

2) Female students had significantly higher average grades than male students where the average grade was higher by 33 UCAS points.
3) Strong agreement with the following aspects of PIB was generally associated with higher average grades:
    a) Parental expectation that student would succeed in education
    b) Inspiration given by parent to work hard for a job
    c) Trust that the student can complete college work independently
    d) Respect for student choices with college work.
4) Students who reported negative parental/carer expectations gained lower grades, on average.
5) Students who reported that parents had always expected them to be successful in general education had statistically significant higher grades than those who did not. However, there were no significant findings when students were asked about parental expectations in relation to college outcomes specifically.
6) Students who did not have knowledge of their mother's previous academic achievement gained significantly lower grades than those who had this knowledge (note the level of maternal achievement in itself did not associate with student outcomes).
7) The analysis showed that there was often a small minority of students (between 2.6 percent and 7 percent) who reported parents/carers to use DAPSS behaviours and gained higher average outcomes than students who did not report these behaviours. These students are an anomaly.

4.3.2. Qualitative data

Research question two also sought to identify (via interviews specifically) whether there was any difference in attainment and the way in which PIB was described by:

a) Students who strongly agree that more involvement from parents/carers would result in higher grades
b) Students who strongly disagree that more involvement from parents/carers would result in higher grades

The interviews involved participants across six different courses (Construction, Health and Social Care, Travel and Tourism, Information Technology, Business and Engineering) and students were invited to participate based on their predicted outcomes and their responses to question 14 of the questionnaire (which relates to RQ2, above).

The first technique used to analyse the interview data was the creation of Table 4.9 using Microsoft Word. Table 4.9 was created to show how responses differ for students in relation to their want of parental involvement, how they feel about their PIB and its association with grades and the grades students actually achieved. For purposes of clarity, the different themes are colour coded so that perceptions can be compared and contrasted (see key at the top of the Table 4.9 on the following page).

Table 4.9 Typology of interview responses for PIB satisfaction, motivation and route to independence:

Key

Text colour	Theme
Light blue	Satisfaction with PIB
Pink	Seeks more PIB
Violet	Motivation
Dark green	Students report a close affinity to parents and so 'cannot let them down'
Light green	Independence
Brown	Life experiences forced independence
Dark Blue	Parental bribes or rewards
Red	Parents are unable to help at all (either through no interest or inability)
Black	Additional information

Level of **attainment** of students	**'Strongly Agree'** that more involvement would result in higher grades	**'Strongly disagree'** that more involvement would result in higher grades
High **(UCAS points in the classifications of 360, 380, 400 or 420)**	Dha – Enjoys and WANTS more PIB (DAPSS). Cannot let parents down Bribes and rewards. Motivation formed from parental values and aspirations. Less independence, more surveillance. Se – Happy with level of involvement. Cannot let parents down. Motivation comes from competition from peers and more general expectations/parental values of education. Has independence and trust. TKa – Wants more involvement/appreciation. Feels that	Rma – Happy with PIB (no support). Parent cannot help, parent does not want to help. Lecturers/tutors have a big influence on success. Huge levels of independence. Motivation to succeed in career and is clear about the value of education/opportunities. Kn – Happy with PIB (no support) but parents do want to help. Huge levels of independence (learnt from observing peers). Motivation formed from competition with peers, career path, personal pride

	motivation needs to come from parents, needs a push to attain more highly Parents give/encourage independence	
Middle **(UCAS points in the classifications of 240, 260, 280 or 320)**	Bah – Happy with *type* of PIB: but would want *more* interest/accessibility. Has independence, but this has been formed due to experience of 5 siblings Motivation would come from parents if relationship was closer. Sees parents as role models and is inspired to work hard and compete with parents/aspires to be like mother Jp – Happy with PIB: would not change support. Feels that he relies on motivation from parents (parental prompts/nagging), has rewards for good grades/parents value education. Inconsistent levels of independence – "on and off" Pu – Wants more interest/hands on/economic help. Wants more push/motivation from parents (feels there is a barrier due to father's work commitments) Motivation formed from parental role models and wants them to be proud of her. She lacks confidence but feels she is viewed as independent and trusted to get on.	Eo – Happy with PIB (no support) Life experiences forced independence. Motivation: "the work is there so why not do it?" (expectations) Kah – Happy with PIB (little support) (Mum would want to be more involved). Seeks independence due to age expectations, relies on mum for practical help. Motivation relates to money and future family and satisfaction with career
Low **(UCAS points in the**	Dla – Happy with PIB: would not change support. Shows appreciation for support due to organisational problems. Recognises the need for motivation from	Jea – Happy with PIB (no support), seeks independence, relies on parents for money

classifications of 80, 120, 160 or 200)	parents – push/individual attention. Parental aspirations for him to get to university. Motivation from previous bad grades – feels the need to prove he can gain higher grades. Confusion in relation to independence due to parental surveillance El – Happy with PIB: would not change support. Motivation comes from parents in the form of parental expectations/a feeling of not wanting to let them down and their aspirations for a good future life. Seeks security in career. Independence is an expectation and student feels freedom.	Motivation is money and enjoyment in later life. Jp2 – Would want support if mother was capable. Parent cannot help. Frustration and forced to be independent through experiences. Motivation relates to short term satisfaction (having fun) Kga – Happy with no support. Forced to be independent through life experiences. Lecturers/tutors have a big influence in emotional support. Motivation relates to providing for her child. Tma – Happy with PIB (no support) Independence is an expectation with age. Motivation is self-driven by success, personal pride and the want of a stable life/income.

The first aspect of note within Table 4.9 is that regardless of grades or perception of PIB, similar traits are seen across the table. In other words, different experiences/perceptions can be identified across all grades and so there is no obvious 'optimum model' in relation to students' experiences and perceptions of PIB and attainment.

Generally, if students have performed highly and perceive this as being partly attributable to parents (i.e. are appreciative of the help and are likely to have close relationships) then these findings suggest that students presume that more of the same treatment will directly (and positively) affect their grades; hence an agreement that more PIB would be useful.

Students who seek a closer relationship or more attention from parents and are not performing highly suggest that more involvement will allow a quick fix and will become apparent in their outcomes. In other words, they are blaming their moderate or low grades on a lack of parental involvement. However, all students with low grades report that they are satisfied with their PIB.

Students who do not feel that parental involvement has a positive effect on grades report little or no support from parents but claim that they have satisfaction with PIB as they are happy with no support. This is true for all attainment levels. However, students who strongly agree that parental involvement influences attainment have mixed perceptions of PIB. Interestingly, those with low outcomes report satisfaction with PIB, whether they agreed or disagreed that more parental involvement would result in higher grades.

Satisfaction with PIB is represented in all categories but there are a few students who did not report satisfaction. Interestingly, the students who seem to want more involvement are those who believe parental involvement has a direct association with higher grades but have proved themselves as able to perform moderately or highly in their course outcomes.

Motivation and links to parental aspirations and expectations are evident for every student who agreed that more parental involvement would result in higher grades and this is an important finding. Where students disagree that parental involvement would result in higher grades, motivation was driven by a number of different factors including: career and opportunity, competition with peers, personal pride, money, to support for future family, enjoyment in later life or short-term satisfaction and these were evident across attainment levels.

Pressured/forced independence is present in every category for both high and low achievers and students who agree and disagree that parental involvement can influence grades. Pressured/forced independence was seen as a result of negative life experiences, such as the death of a close family member for ‘Eo’ or teenage pregnancy for ‘Kgh’. One student

reports that parents are unable to find time or resources to help her due to having 5 siblings (Bah). Other students do not feel they have independence due to surveillance methods (Dha – highly attaining) and (Dla – low attaining). Students who report independence often also report age-related expectations in relation to independence.

Six students, who highlight the important role of college lecturers, also strongly disagreed that more parental involvement would result in higher grades.

Three students report that they do not want to 'let their parents down'. These students all believe that parental involvement can influence grades positively but there is a mix of outcomes between them.

4.4 Research question three

The 'compare column proportions' tool used the Pearson Chi Squared test in SPSS as a test of significance to determine whether the amount students agreed or disagreed with certain PIB differed across the factors of: age, ethnicity, gender and course. All PIB statements were used during this analysis process and **none** were found to create significant differences for any of the factors (see Appendix P for an excerpt of these tests as the data in full is extensive).

4.5 Research question four

4.5.1. Quantitative data

4.5.1.1. Focus Groups

Students were asked to select the statements that they strongly agreed with in terms of their PIB within their current home experiences. The focus group PIB statement data was partly analysed using an excel spread-sheet and a calculator due to the small sample size (24) (see Table 4.10, below). Students were drawn from different courses (see Methodology). The PIB statement numbers refer to whether the statements were DAPSS (4a, 4b, etc.),

PAPSS (5a, 5b, etc.), and NEAV (7a, 7b, etc.) or PEAV (8a, 8b, etc.) (See Table 3.2 in Chapter Three).

Key: 1 = not chosen 2 = chosen
white = neither statement chosen in the set
green = one statement chosen and one statement not chosen in statement set
red = both statements chosen in the statement set

Table 4.10: Initial Analysis of Focus Group Statements

	PIB Statements																					
	DAPSS and PAPSS														NEAV and PEAV							
Student pseudonyms	**4a**	**5a**	**4b**	**5b**	**4c**	**5c**	**4d**	**5d**	**4e**	**5e**	**4f**	**5f**	**4g**	**5g**	**7a**	**8a**	**7b**	**8b**	**7c**	**8c**	**7d**	**8d**	**7e**	**8e**
Sah	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2
Eiy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2
Lws	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
Lks	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2
Dnl	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
Jsh	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2
Lly	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
Ara	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
Jsa	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Jss	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Poe	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2
Cle	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2
Hii	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Oia	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2
Abi	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2
Gora	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2
Byy	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2
Jms	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
Bre	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2
Hry	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2
Jme	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Oia	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Gora	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Drl	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2
Total chosen	2	16	1	13	2	14	5	4	3	22	4	20	1	18	4	18	4	18	7	15	2	20	0	21
Total not chosen	22	8	21	11	22	10	19	20	21	2	20	4	23	6	20	6	20	6	17	9	22	4	24	1

Table 4.10 shows that the average number of statements chosen by each student was 9.5, which represents 40 percent of the statements. The lowest number chosen was four and the highest number chosen was thirteen. The statements which were most agreed with were 5e: “I choose when and how to do my college work”, 5f: “My parents/carers trust me to do college work myself”, 5g: “My parents/carers respect my choices when it comes to college work”, 8a: “My parents/carers expect me to do well at college”, 8d: “My parents/carers think it is important to get a good education and 8e: “I value a good education”.

The statements which were rarely agreed with were 4a: “My parents/carers like to be in control of the amount and/or quality of college work that I do”, 4b: “I rely on my parents/carers to manage and help me with coursework”, 4c: “My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have not asked them to”, 4e: “I sometimes feel pressurised by my parents/carers to do college work when I do not really want to”, 4g: “My parents/carers make choices about my work”, 7d: “My parents/carers do not think education is particularly important” and 7e: “I do not place great importance on my education”.

When analysing PAPSS statements against DAPSS statements, PAPSS statements represented just under three quarters of the total statements chosen in this category (74.8 percent). DAPSS statements represented 25.2 percent of the total statements chosen in this category. As a percentage of the NEAV/PEAV category, NEAV statements were selected at 17.5 percent of the total chosen for that category and PEAV statements represented 82.5 percent of the total chosen within this category. This shows that students were more likely to agree with PAPSS statements over DAPSS statements and PEAV statements over NEAV statements. Table 4.10 also shows that if students chose PAPSS statements then they would also be more likely to agree with PEAV statements also, showing an association between these PIB statements.

All statements were chosen at some point throughout the activity in the main study bar one: 7e: “I do not place great importance on my education”.

The statements were designed to be part of a small set where two statements were written with a view to contradict each other to show clear difference in parenting behaviours. Student choice in this activity was likely to indicate whether students understood and responded to those contradictions in the set and explores whether:

a) Statements are reliably worded to communicate such contradictions

b) Students were reflecting a likely perception of their PIB and not just choosing statements at random/not engaging properly with the task.

Additionally, students were asked to explain their choices of statements. Students could therefore explain if and why those contradictions existed in their PIB in practice and justify their choice which is presented in the qualitative data.

A total of 6.25 percent of statements were chosen in an opposing set, suggesting that students generally did not choose statements which were intended to contradict each other. However, for those that did, this may be as a result of students misunderstanding the

language used to describe the behaviours or experienced a mixture of PAPSS and DAPSS behaviours. Choosing contradictory statements happened for 9 students in total. In 27 percent of the total cases, opposing statements in a set had neither statement selected. Every student bar one had at some point selected neither statement in an opposing set. This is not surprising, since students who feel they have no parental involvement at all would not choose any of the PIB, whether it is DAPSS or PAPSS, however they may choose statements that relate to the value of education or the communication of general parental aspirations. Where statements were selected, the opposing statement in the same set was selected 66.7 percent as a percentage of the total sets.

Out of all the statement pairs, set 7c and 8c were most commonly chosen together: “My parents/carers do not have particular aspirations for what job I get”/ “My parents/carers have inspired me to work hard so I can get the job that I want to get”. The distinction here was intended to relate to the communication of unclear aspirations (7c) and clear support for aspirations (8c), although this appears to have been received differently by students. Additionally, this statement set also had nearly a third of students choosing not to select either statement. This statement set showed the largest difference between students in terms of reflecting the contradictory nature of the statements.

On the other hand, all students reflected the contradictory nature of statement set 4f/5f by choosing one out of the two statements: “My parents/ carers do not trust me to get on with work myself”/ “My parents/carers trust me to do college work myself”. There was not one statement that all students selected.

DAPSS and PAPSS statements should not necessarily be viewed as contradictions of each other because some students experience neither behaviours in the set if they feel they have little or no parental involvement. Additionally, if a student has a very interested parent, there may be times when the student has felt that their parent has behaved according to both of the statements (e.g. have exhibited PIB for both 4a and 5a (they have tried to control the student one day but also offered gentle encouragement the next)). This shows that parental

involvement is more complex than the four categories of DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV, as is reiterated below.

DAPSS statements associate with NEAV and PAPSS with PEAV. However, it can be concluded that student perception of PIB is more complex than merely DAPSS or PAPSS and NEAV or PEAV, so although these categories have been a useful tool through which to create these statements, these findings suggest/present a more nuanced picture/representation of parental involvement.

4.5.1.2. Questionnaire data

Cronbach Alpha test

This question also relates to the robustness of the conceptual structure of DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV. The Cronbach Alpha test was used to measure the internal consistency between the statements in each of the four pre-defined groups. Consistency was indicated by a value of 0.6 or above (Field, 2013) where a group of statements were inputted together. All four groups showed internal consistency. See Table 4.11 below:

Table 4.11: Internal Consistency test for pre-defined groups

Group	Cronbach Alpha
DAPSS	0.833
PAPSS	0.602
NEAV	0.662
PEAV	0.751
DAPSS & NEAV	0.781
PAPSS & PEAV	0.758

The highest level of internal consistency relates to DAPSS with a value of 0.833. The PEAV grouping also displayed consistency at 0.751. However, the PAPSS group measured 0.602 and the NEAV measured 0.662. Interestingly, when PAPSS and PEAV were combined to make a larger group of statements, the level of consistency rose to 0.758. Likewise, when NEAV and DAPSS were combined, the level of consistency was 0.781. Therefore, although the four main categories do have internal consistency with a value of above 0.6, when the four groups are combined to make two, the level of consistency rises, suggesting that the relationships between the groups may be more complex than first realised where associations exist between statements in different groups. This finding was

also echoed in the focus group categories developed from the statement choosing exercise. Although there are associations between the initial categories RQ4 explores this in more detail below by analysing all statements (bar 4d and 5d as there were problems with their reliability) using Categorical Factor Analysis (CFA).

Categorical Factor Analysis

When the analysis was run with 22 PIB statements, four factors were produced and when combined, explained 62.5 percent of the variance. Statements 4d and 5d were not included in this analysis due to validity problems. Table 4.12 on the following page presents the factor structure and shows which items are attributed to each factor. It also shows the individual percentages of variance for each factor in the 'variance explained' column.

Table 4.12: Factor Structure

Extracted Factors	Items Loaded	Ordinal Alpha	Variance Explained
Factor 1: Untrusting interference with pressure and low expectations	4c: "My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have not asked them to" 4e: "I sometimes feel pressurised by my parents/carers to do college work when I do not really want to" 4f: "My parents/carers do not really trust me to get on with my work myself" 4g: "My parents/carers make choices about my work" 7b: "My parents/carers are unsure whether I will succeed in education"	0.876	22.048
Factor 2: Emotional and Practical support	5a: "My parents/carers gently encourage me to complete my work for college" 5b: "If I am struggling, my parents/carers will try to guide me in my college work" 5c: "My parents/carers are willing to talk to me about my college work, rather than getting involved with the essay writing" 4a: "My parents/carers like to be in control of the amount and/or quality of college work that I do" 4b: "I rely on my parents/carers to manage and help me with coursework" 4c: "My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have not asked them to"	0.798	15.576
Factor 3: Expectations, parental inspiration and values for education	8a: "My parents/carers expect me to do well at college" 8c: "My parents/carers have inspired me to work hard so I can get the job that I want" 8d: "My parents/carers think it is important to get a good education" 8e: "I value a good education"	0.823	15.588
Factor 4: Low parental expectations and aspirations	7a: "My parents/carers are not sure how well I will do at college" 7b: "My parents/carers are unsure whether I will succeed in education" 7c: "My parents/carers do not have particular aspirations for what job I get"	0.675	9.254

The four factors are described in more detail below.

Factor one – made up from five positive-value items: 4c, 4e, 4f, 4g, 7b and three negative-value items:

Untrusting interference with pressure and low expectations

This group identifies behaviours which are related to parental interference, pressure, low trust, parents who take the lead and make choices for students and have low expectations for student outcomes in education generally. It is *less* likely to associate with trust, respect and student choices/autonomy.

Factor two – made up from 6 positive-value items: 5a, 5b, 5c, 4a, 4b and 4c:

Emotional and practical support

Students report that parents are willing to talk, rather than get involved in writing their essays. However, parents may become involved when they have not been asked to, but also gently support the student, providing guidance when the student is struggling. There is an element of parental control as parents like to know or influence what the student is doing, but emotional support appears high through encouragement.

Factor three – made up of four positive-value items: 8a, 8c, 8d, 8e and one negative: 7d.

Expectations, parental inspiration and values for education

Students report that parents expect them to do well and that parents have inspired them to work hard to realise a particular career. They report that both they and their parents value opportunities provided by education. The negative association relates to students who report that they believe education is not particularly important.

Factor four – made up of three positive value items: 7a 7b and 7c:

Low expectations in educational outcomes and no clear parental aspirations

Students report that parents are not sure how well they will achieve specifically at college or in education generally. These students are also not likely to have parents who have communicated particular aspirations for the jobs that students might attain.

It is important to note that there are two statements that are identified in two different factors. Statement 4c (relating to parental interference) is present in Factor 1 and Factor 2 and statement 7b (relating to low expectations for education) is present in Factor 1 and Factor 4. Therefore, low expectations can be coupled both with parental interference, pressure, low trust, lack of ownership *and* low parental aspirations creating two separate factors. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Multi-Nominal Logistic Regression

The Parameter Estimates Table (4.13) on the following page shows the outcomes of the Multinominal Logistic Regression Analysis.

Table 4.13: Regression analysis parameter estimates

Table of Parameter Estimates			
Dependent variable: UCAS points	B	P (0.05) Sig.	Odd Ratio Exp (B)
Factor 1: Untrusting interference with pressure and low expectations	0.106	0.026	1.112
Factor 2: Emotional and Practical support	0.039	0.499	1.039
Factor 3: Expectations, parental inspiration and values for education	-0.115	0.080	0.891
Factor 4: Low parental expectations and aspirations	0.246	0.008	1.279
R^2 = 0.193 (Nagelkerke)			

Factors 1 and 4 associated with lower UCAS points. Factors 2 and 3 showed no association with UCAS points.

Factor 1: (Untrusting interference with pressure and low expectations): 4c, 4e, 4f, 4g, 7b had a statistical significance value of 0.026 meaning that students who reported PIB in this category were likely to attain lower grades. The value of the odd ratio (Exp. (B)) of 1.112 is also important, as a value over 1 signifies that this factor has a strong influence over the

dependent variable (outcomes). Practically, this means that students who reported interference, pressure, and low trust, coupled with low expectations gained lower UCAS points.

Factor 2: (Emotional and Practical Support) made up of 4a, 4b, 4c, 5a, 5b, 5c did not associate with attainment. A similar result was also found for Factor 3: (Expectations, parental inspiration and values for education) made up of 8a, 8c, 8d and 8e.

Factor 4: (Low expectations in educational outcomes and no clear parental aspirations): 7a, 7b and 7c had a statistical significance value of 0.008 meaning that students who reported PIB in this category were likely to attain low grades (see Table 4.13). The value of the odd ratio (Exp. (B)) was 1.279, which again signifies that this factor has a strong influence over the dependent variable (outcomes).

4.5.2 Qualitative data

Research aim four focused on whether investigation of student perceptions revealed distinct models of student experiences and if so, whether these models had any association with attainment. To begin to create a theory or model, it was necessary to firstly determine the extent to which different topics were seen across research tools (see table 4.2) but also to look at how the most common (i.e. frequently discussed) topics related to each other in order to establish some shared concepts by creating three diagrams (Figures 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6) in section 4.5.2.1, below. These diagrams laid the foundations on which to build the overall model.

4.5.2.1. Interrogating the findings

The following three diagrams have been devised by exploring topics identified in the initial thematic analysis process which resulted in the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation diagrams. Although all sub-nodes/nodes/super-nodes/themes can be seen to link to the idea of motivation, there are some that are frequently and consistently identified by students as

being most influential. This section attempts to communicate these findings more succinctly through visual representations which also show links between the common topics.

1) Figure 4.4: RD: This diagram categorises the most important influences for students' attainment and success at college
2) Figure 4.5: EoM: This diagram indicates the main *influences* for student *motivation*
3) Figure 4.6: IASO: This diagram highlights the main influences for *independence, autonomy and student ownership* which are seen as the key drivers in intrinsic motivation specifically.

The 'Related Domains' diagram (RD)

Three categories have been devised in the related domains diagram:

1) Intrinsic factors (things that are driven by the student: Age, want of independence and ownership, aspirations and personality traits)
2) Internal family factors (things that happen within the family that might affect the student: Certain types of PIB, barriers to support such as siblings or lack of time, economic capital, practical support, parental competency, aspirations, expectations and responsiveness)
3) External factors (things that happen outside the family: College staff, undertaking of casual work, the influence of peers, travel to college and college course and content).

The RD diagram can be viewed in Figure 4.4. Although separate domains, the three components are associated to each other (as can be seen by the blue arrows) but there are also specific links that can be made between topics (see black arrows). As an example, college course and content are an external factor but it links to lack of parental competence which is an internal family factor. Figure 4.4 is shown on the following page.

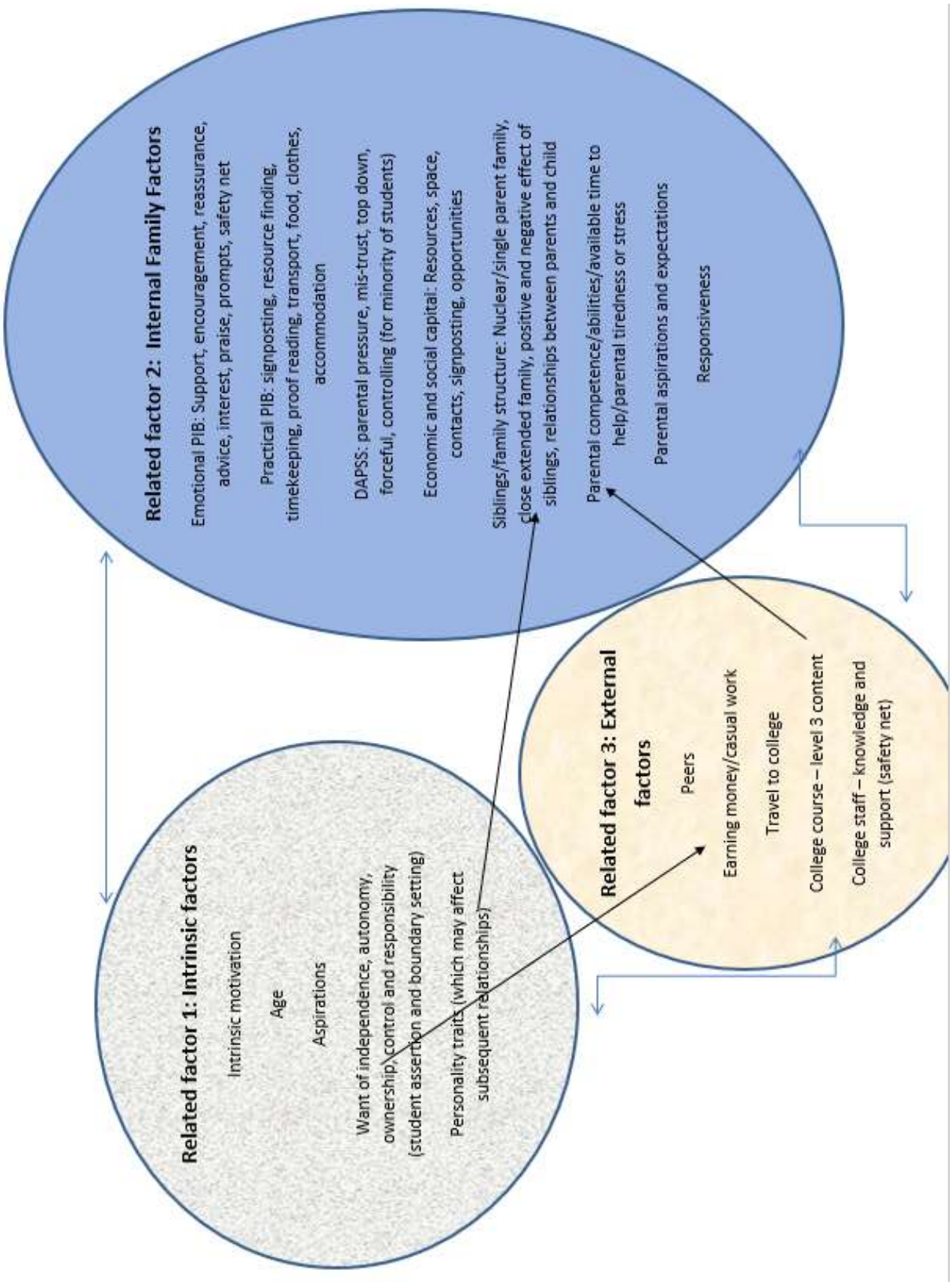


Figure 4.4: The Related Domains (RD) diagram

The Elements of Motivation Diagram (EoM)

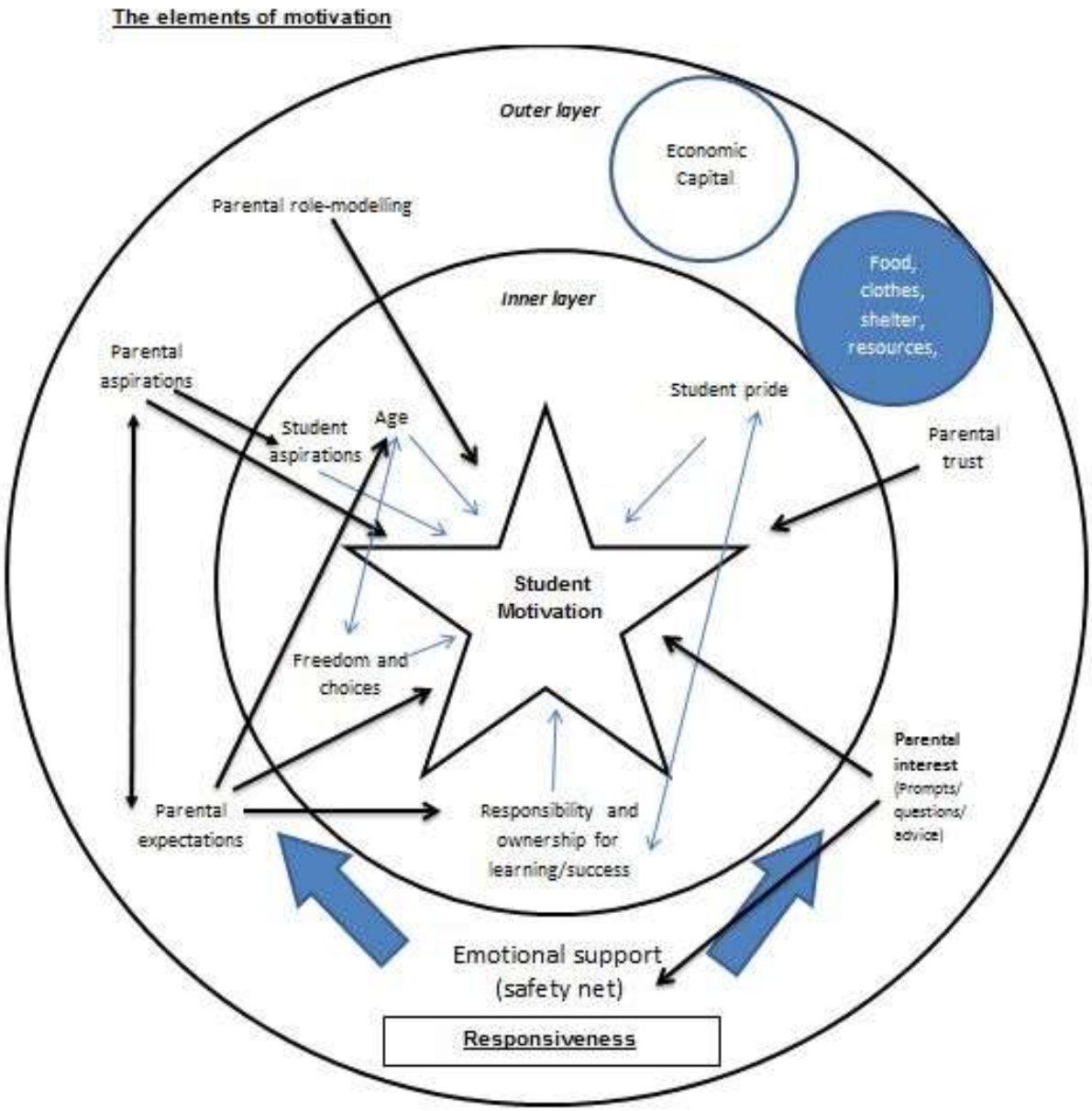


Figure 4.5: The EoM diagram

"The Elements of Motivation" (EoM) diagram indicates the most influential factors reported by students. As can be seen, student motivation is placed centrally and can be influenced by/associated to other factors. The inner layer shows the 'intrinsic drivers' for motivation: 'age', 'student pride', 'student aspirations', 'responsibility and ownership for learning' and 'freedom and choices'. As the blue arrows show, these can associate with each other as well

as directly with student motivation (e.g. student pride has links with responsibility, ownership for learning and success).

Beyond that there is an outer layer, which holds 'extrinsic drivers' for motivation, and relate to PIB: parental trust, parental expectation, parental role-modelling, parental aspiration, parental interest and emotional support. These extrinsic drivers can directly affect student motivation but may also influence or associate with the intrinsic drivers for motivation e.g. parental aspirations can often be reflected in student aspirations (see black arrows: ⟶). They can also link with more than one aspect e.g. parental expectations can link to student age and responsibility/ownership for learning. There can also be links between extrinsic drivers as is seen for parental expectations and parental aspirations (shown by the black double ended arrow between the two: ⟷).

Emotional support is placed in such a way as to underpin the inner layer which, in turn, is reinforced by responsiveness (i.e. the idea that PIB is fluid and responsive to student need or situation and is best understood through deep relationships and understanding). A key feature of emotional support was seen to be offered through parental interest (seen by asking questions, prompts, or offering advice or help) and this is shown by the black arrow which connects the two within the outer layer. This idea of emotional support can be perceived by students a lot more generally, such as parents enquiring how students are (and not specifically relating to their studies). Therefore, emotional support remains separate from parental interest.

Economic capital and practical support in terms of accommodation, food and clothes are aspects positioned in the outer layer within their own spheres because, although necessary in some ways for student attainment, it was not clear during the initial thematic analysis how these directly or indirectly associated with motivation, if at all. However, they are identified as supportive elements within the outer layer.

DAPSS is not featured in this diagram because:

a) It was only identified for a minority of students
b) For those who experienced it, it was not seen to positively drive motivation (although there is one exception)
c) Many students appeared to report the experiences of others in relation to DAPSS parenting practices rather than themselves (particularly during the focus group discussions).

Importantly, this model is seen to fit with the majority of students e.g. not all students will experience every aspect. Additionally, this model does not demonstrate the frequency of aspects and may not be reflective of PIB at the moment of data collection but may show a culmination of aspects which have gathered and disappeared at different points in time. As an example, depending on age, some aspects may not have affected motivation at the time of data collection but may have contributed to intrinsic motivation over time (e.g. parental expectations and aspirations can be communicated over a lifetime and from a young age and therefore may not necessarily have been voiced or recognised specifically at age 16+).

The influences for Independence, Autonomy and Student Ownership (IASO) diagram

Independence was frequently voiced by students as central and so it was important to identify how and why independence may have been developed. Although this was asked as a specific question in the interviews, information from the questionnaires and focus groups also contributed to the formation of Figure 4.6 shown on the following page.

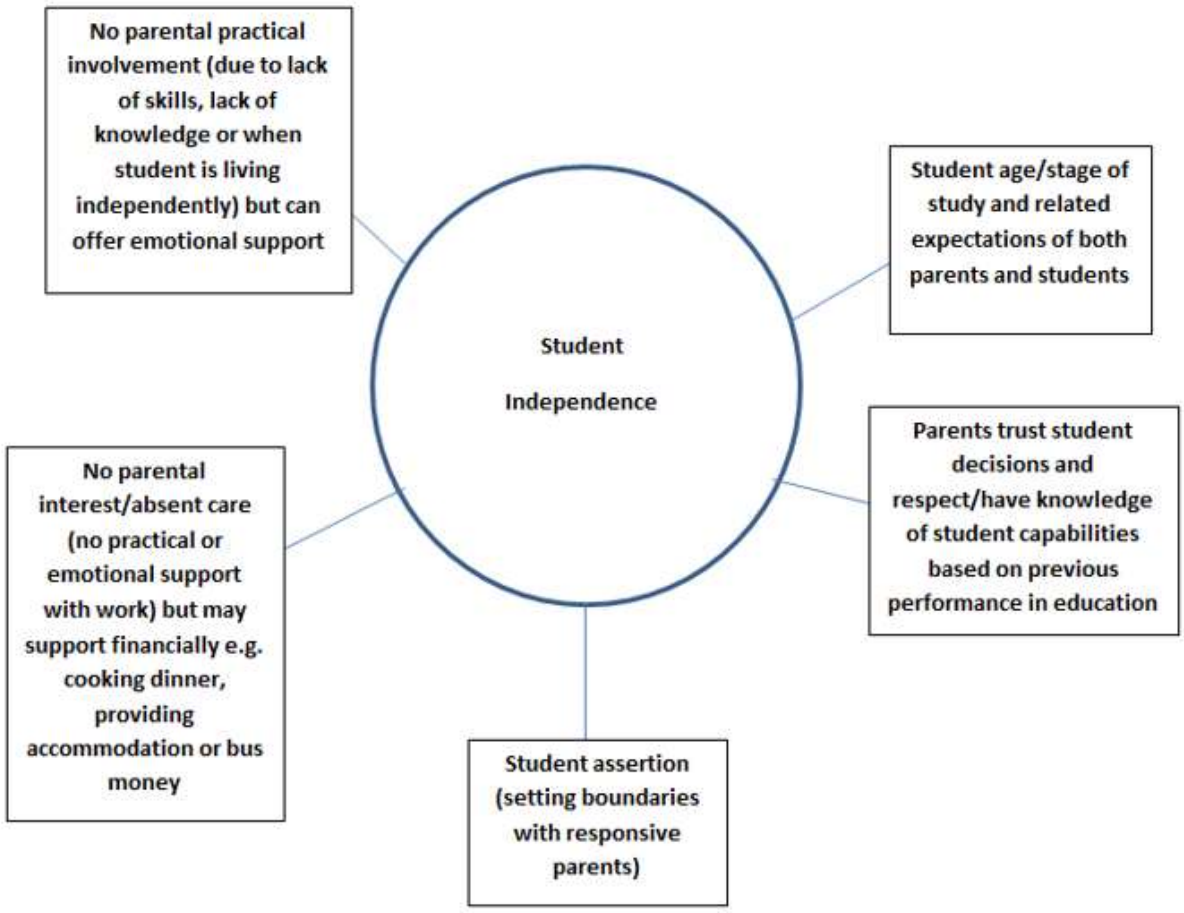


Figure 4.6: The Independence/Autonomy in Student Ownership (IASO) diagram

Figure 4.6 highlights the main reported influences for independence and autonomy in student ownership for learning. As is seen above, both students and parents/carers contribute to the idea of ownership for learning but in different ways. Most students assert their own boundaries, have parental respect and have expectations for ownership for learning at this stage/age of study. However, for some students, parental expectations, lack of interest and lack of practical involvement can also drive independence, whether the student feels this is forced or natural. The themes of independence, respect for autonomy and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were seen across multiple ethnicities, courses and genders. Parental responsiveness and student assertion were frequent across all ages of student (17-26). It appeared that enrolment at college was a significant factor in the establishment of independence, regardless of specific age of student.

4.5.2.2. An overall model

Research question six asked whether a model or theory could be proposed in relation to college students' perceptions of PIB. In the previous section themes were identified, compared and related to produce visualisations in the form of diagrams which communicate the key findings. The three visualisations (RD, EoM and IASO) although helpful, seem a little disjointed because they fail to summarise the data holistically. Despite the RD diagram serving to communicate student influences in three domains and demonstrating important links between themes identified in the data, it does not successfully allow a typology of PIB to be visualised which is reflective of most (if not all) students' experiences. Likewise, although the EoM and the IASO diagrams identify many important associations between factors, they do not fully demonstrate the complete scope of student voices and appear to visualise important themes for the majority – but not all - students.

The research tools exposed a number of different situations where either intrinsic or extrinsic motivators were seen to associate with student attainment but were not related specifically to PIB. As an example, some students achieved highly even when they appeared to have no obvious parental involvement but had strong intrinsic motivation. Others who reportedly had disinterested parents/carers became frustrated and performed poorly. Some students who reported controlling PIB (DAPSS) appeared to either thrive from this support and achieve highly or become frustrated, lose motivation and perform less highly, as was seen in the interview findings. Other highly attaining students maintain autonomy through asserting clear boundaries for PIB, where parents/carers appeared to attempt to behave according to DAPSS practices but agreed to change their behaviour to allow independence with the posed threat of student rebellion, although students are aware that the parental 'safety net' still exists, should they require it.

The 'Layers of Influence' Diagram (LoID)

The LoID (see Figure 4.7) attempts to draw together the important concepts identified in the thematic analysis and relate them to each other to create/propose a model and accompanying theory. To explore different perspectives fully, it also attempts to show the discrepancy between students' expectations and college expectations of student needs (the information for which has been taken from Chapter One in relation to the exploration of the college parental involvement strategy document).

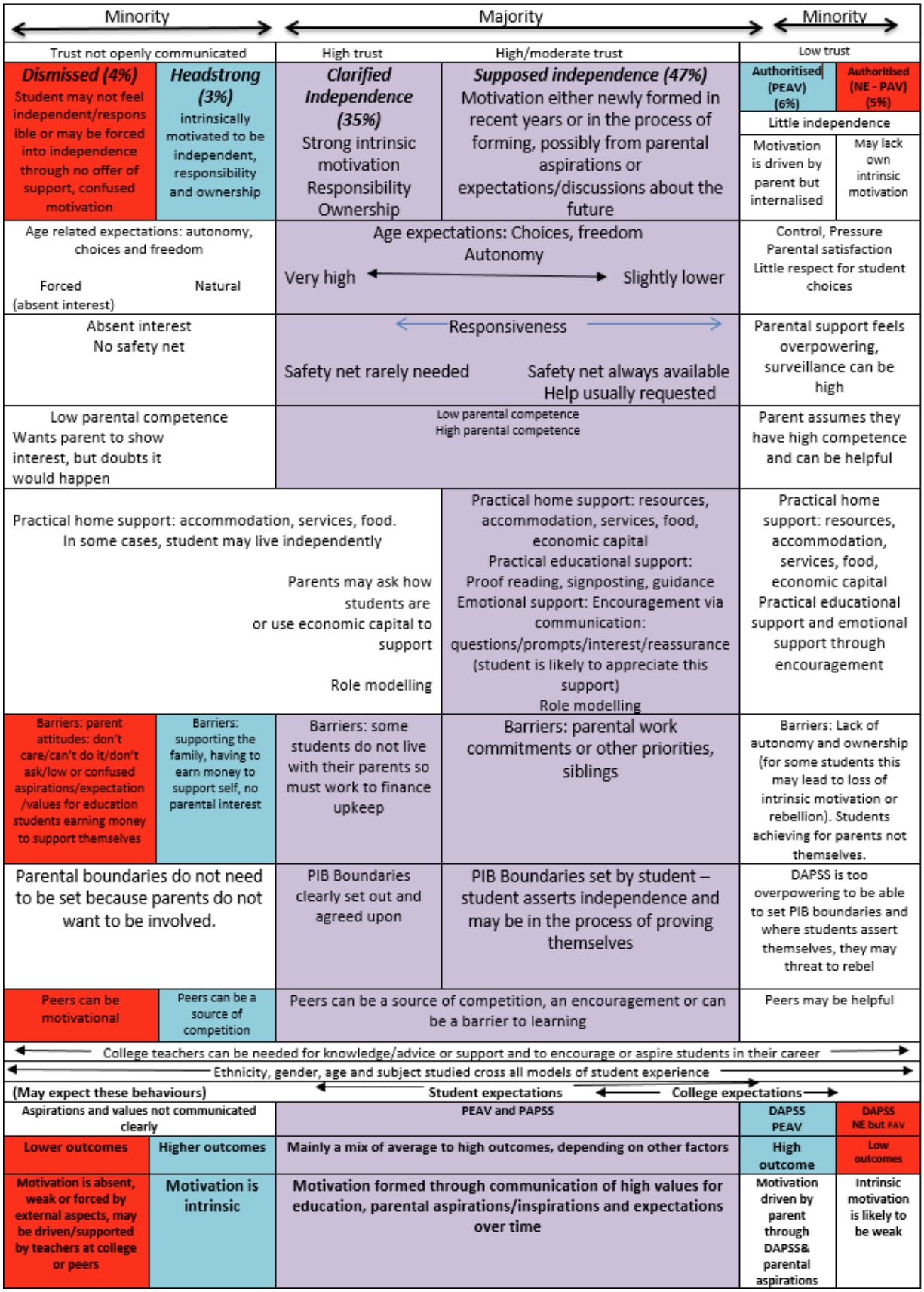
The LoID seeks to demonstrate/reflect students' perceptions of parental involvement across all qualitative research tools and identifies six main models in respect of PIB for college-aged students. These will be referred to as the six 'models of student experience' (MoSE). The LoID has been created as it enables student experiences to be structured in layers to show all the different influences that have been noted by students in relation to parental involvement across the different MoSE. Two acronyms are used because they are describing different aspects of the same idea. The differences between the MoSE are found in the different layers which are seen to contribute to each experience. This diagram is intended to be student focussed rather than parent-focussed. It does not just view parental behaviours as stand-alone entities (i.e. like the PAPSS and DAPSS statements); it intends to demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of the parent-student relationship which is affected by:

- Awareness and expectations
- Deep understandings (which links to close relationships)
- The formation of motivation, parental responsiveness and student/parent assertion.

The diagram will be explained from the left to the right (starting with 'Dismissed' and ending with 'Authoritised NE-PAV') but has been organised into layers (rows) to show the different influences that students report. The order of the layers is not particularly important, except that the key themes of trust, independence and age are near the top as these are seen to be high on the students' agendas and motivation is positioned at the bottom to signify that this

is likely to underpin the other layers. At the very top, the black arrows identify the approximate proportions of students for each model (i.e. majority or minority) and, as can be seen, the majority of students appear to fit within the middle two columns and have been coloured purple. The far-left columns and far right column represent a much smaller number of students (see numbers). The categories are labelled as ‘Dismissed’, ‘Headstrong’, ‘Clarified Independence’, ‘Supposed Independence’ and ‘Authoritised PEAV’ and ‘Authoritised NE-PAV’. Figure 4.7 is on the following page.

Figure 4.7: The Layers of Influence Diagram (LoID) showing the six MoSE:



To compare differences in the far right and far left models of student PIB experience, the columns have been coloured. The red and blue columns relate to the likely attainment for students in these categories. ‘Authoritised NE-PAV’ and ‘Dismissed’ are coloured red because these students are likely to gain low grades and ‘Authoritised PEAV’ and ‘Headstrong’ are coloured blue which represents that these students are likely to gain highly. The ‘Supposed Independence’ and ‘Clarified Independence’ categories do not appear to associate with attainment.

Although the columns coloured blue relate to higher outcomes, it cannot be assumed that these are the ‘optimum’ forms of PIB due to the following:

1) There groups are only represented by 9 percent of students
2) These categories show that completely different behaviours can be associated with high outcomes which suggests that there are a wider factors/influences that affect attainment, including parent-student relationships, parental responsiveness, prior student attainment and deep-rooted cultural expectations.

One of the main details to note is that some students’ experiences may be viewed on a continuum between the models of ‘Authoritised PEAV’, ‘Supposed Independence’ and ‘Clarified Independence’ where students might slide between them (from right to left) during their time at college. This is dependent upon a number of factors including student assertion which is likely to be influenced by age and expectations on enrolment at college and a consideration for future study (e.g. If students want to attend university, they are already aware that they are required to learn the skills to be autonomous learners). In many cases, students explained how they asserted their wishes in relation to how they believed their parents/carers should or should not be behaving in relation to college work. Below, the characteristics of the different models of students’ PIB experience are described:

'Dismissed' and 'Headstrong' MoSE

Students in these categories have parents/carers who do not want to be involved with their education. The idea of trust does not appear to be communicated clearly and students reported that parents/carers often have low competence so cannot nor do not want to support them. Parents/carers offer accommodation and food but students may live independently and may feel pressure to financially support themselves. Students do not feel the need to set boundaries for PIB because there is no need for them to assert their independence: it is already expected. The main distinction between these categories is rooted in motivation. In the 'Dismissed' category, motivation is either absent, weak or has been forced by external aspects (i.e. life experiences have contributed to the student either being forced to complete college to gain employment to support themselves or has instilled a desire to leave the family home due to negative or weak relationships). Students in this category may wish parents/carers to show more interest in them and their work but also display disappointment and anger and believe it is too late for them to change their attitude. Students in this category are more likely to receive lower grades at college. Conversely in the 'Headstrong' category, there is an overwhelming sense of intrinsic motivation, where despite external influences, the student views themselves as competent and they do not crave any such attention from parents/carers. Although the phrase 'Headstrong' may have negative connotations, for the purposes of this project, it demonstrates positive attributes in relation to high intrinsic motivation where students enjoy responsibility and ownership. Due to their intrinsic drive to succeed, these students are likely to perform highly and attain high grades at college. 'Dismissed' students, however, do not enjoy or value the lack of attention or sense of freedom given by parents/carers and can feel that the absent interest of parents/carers is a barrier to their success. These students may also think that if parents/carers wanted to help them, their grades would be higher, demonstrating clear frustration with lack of PIB. These students can be motivated by their peers and may not find their parents to be a source of aspiration or communicate high values for education. Expectations may also not be communicated clearly. This category has clear links with the

NEAV statements alongside parental distrust. ‘Headstrong’ students, however, take the lead and are more likely to compete with peers, ignore them altogether, or be frustrated with their lack of motivation. Both categories fail to identify with any feeling of a parental ‘safety net’.

‘Clarified and Supposed Independence’ MoSE

These categories can be viewed on a continuum where ‘Supposed Independence’ is likely to precede ‘Clarified Independence’. Both feature age expectations, autonomy, choices, freedom, intrinsic motivation and parental responsiveness. Both recognise that parents will be there if needed and both view peers as either competition, an encouragement or as a barrier to learning, depending on individual differences. Both appreciate the knowledge and support given by lecturers at this level and both have motivation which is likely to have been formed through communication of high values for education, aspirations and expectations over time.

However, the key features of ‘Supposed Independence’ relate to the moderately used (or moderately offered) safety net where help is usually requested by the student when required. Students in the ‘Clarified Independence’ category rarely ask for help, although they are aware of the safety net’s existence as a last resort.

Students in the ‘Supposed Independence’ category may feel independent and have a clear drive to involve themselves in their work and yet can rely on parents/carers for practical and/or different forms of emotional support. Some students in this category may report that they have required emotional or practical support but that barriers such as parental work commitments or other priorities have not allowed for this. Parents/carers provide resources and use economic capital as a support mechanism when required. Competent parents/carers were reported to offer practical educational support such as proof reading and signposting and practical home support such as accommodation and food. Emotional support is offered through encouragement via communication e.g. asking study-related questions. Some students within this category may have started to set boundaries for PIB

since enrolling at college. They have a clear view of their independence in making choices and are clear about how much/what kinds of PIB they expect, given their age and stage. They may also be in the process of proving themselves/improving parental trust through passing their assignments at level 3 standard.

However, students with 'Clarified Independence' have a stronger sense of intrinsic motivation, responsibility and ownership. Reportedly, parents/carers may ask how children are and use economic capital to purchase resources, but parents/carers are not likely to offer practical educational support or ask direct questions about the students' work. As students rarely ask parents for help, parental work commitments and siblings do not present themselves as a barrier, because the student assumes very high levels of autonomy. PIB boundaries have been clearly set out and agreed upon – either because the student has previously asserted authority or due to parental expectations which relate to the student's age and level of work. Students in this category are likely to have felt a sense of independence (through parental expectations) during the GCSE years, and so quickly assume full independence when enrolling at college.

'Supposed Independence' is reflective of PAPSS parenting styles where gentle encouragement and the knowledge of a safety net is evident. PEAV behaviours are noted for both 'Supposed Independence' and 'Clarified Independence' where parents have elements of trust, values for education and clear aspirations and expectations.

"Authoritised PEAV" and "Authoritised NE-PAV" MoSE

A relatively small number of students note these approaches. In both categories the student feels little independence and feels controlled or pressured to work to satisfy parental wishes/requests. Students report that parents/carers are frequently involved despite whether they have low or high academic competence, but parents/carers usually assume high competence and believe they know more than their children about college work. In this way, the students are *Authoritised* (i.e. someone assumes authority over them). These behaviours

are reflective of the initial DAPSS categories. Students in this category are likely to receive practical home support (i.e. accommodation/food), practical educational support (help with essay writing and researching course/subject content) and possibly some emotional support (through encouragement). The barriers for students in this category may be that the overpowering PIB results in a lack of autonomy and ownership which may lead to a lack or loss of motivation for students at this age and stage. Peers may or may not be helpful for students in these categories, depending upon other factors such as student personality.

The main difference between the two categories is whether the behaviours are coupled with positive or negative communication of expectations. Students who experience 'Authoritised PEAV' have parents/carers who communicate high expectations. However, 'Authoritised NE-PAV' have parents/carers who communicate low or negative expectations. Positive high values and aspirations for education are evident in *both* categories, as both groups value the opportunities that education gives (and hence parents/carers pressure students to do well), but parents/carers may lack trust that students can successfully pass their course or gain the highest grades alone. This may explain the DAPSS behaviours where parents/carers feel they need to push their children to pass, fearing they would not be able to complete it independently. However, where controlling behaviours are coupled with positive high expectations, career aspirations and high values for education in the 'Authoritised PEAV', students are:

a) More likely to associate positively with outcomes (perform highly)
b) More likely to appreciate this form of support
c) Responsive to their parents' needs/drive to be involved by accepting support in this form.

It is important to note that the behaviours in the 'Authoritised PEAV' are likely to be accepted and appreciated by students who report positive relationships with parents/carers. Students in this category ultimately want to please their parents/carers and do not feel the need to assert themselves because they understand the reasons behind their parents' behaviour and

feel a sense of appreciation. This may be due to cultural or historical expectations. Note that, although these behaviours and attitudes appear to associate with attainment for this small group, it cannot be stated that these PIB would have any effect on students who do not share the same relationship with their parents/carers. The majority of students who report a sense of independence and freedom, alongside respectful parents/carers, are happy with their PIB.

For students in the 'Authoritised NE-PAV' category, controlling PIB is received as unwanted attention and fails to be a form of emotional support. Students in this category are less likely to perform highly and parents/carers are less likely to trust them to perform highly. This may relate to previous poor performance where parents/carers feel that students are not internally motivated or able to do well and so attempt to provide 'forced' external motivation, possibly due to their own anxiety.

Students in both categories are not likely to be given the opportunity to set PIB boundaries. However, some determined students who had experienced these initial behaviours reported to speak openly to parents/carers about what they view as helpful or not helpful, what they expect parents to be doing and why and threatened to rebel against the controlling measures. Students in this position are likely to currently reflect the 'Supposed Independence' category if parents were respectful of their wishes, but this is dependent upon individual relationships.

The fourth row from the bottom shows arrows which locate the differences in perception between college and student expectations in relation to PIB. The DQS suggested that all parents/carers should offer some kind of obvious support (emotional, practical or both) to help students gain higher grades. She seemed clear that students required help with organisation and that they would respond well to a push to motivate them to meet deadlines. She voiced that deadlines and grades needed to be shared with parents and favoured extrinsic motivational measures. This view appeared to be reflective of the controlling,

pressurised approaches of the DAPSS style but may also, at times, be reflective of the 'Supposed Independence' model where parents provide a safety net and emotional and practical help where necessary in response to student needs. The DQS did not specifically refer to the importance of expectations, aspirations or values, although it can be assumed that the college would be likely to favour the 'Authoritised PEAV' as opposed to the 'Authoritised NE-PAV' MoSE. Student expectations and college expectations do overlap within the 'Supposed Independence' category but the student expectations stretch beyond 'Supposed Independence into the category of 'Clarified Independence', which does not reflect college expectations. On the left-hand side of the row, it has been identified that some students in the 'Headstrong' and 'Dismissed' categories will fully expect their parents/carers to have no interest/involvement due to past experience with some in the 'Dismissed' category claiming it is too late for their parents/carers to change their attitude.

4.5.3 Summary of findings

Although most students appear to seek independence and encounter high levels of positive responsiveness, around 60 percent still describe support methods which relate to external motivation provided by parents/carers. This includes behaviours such as showing interest, asking questions, parental prompts, listening and praising. Specifically, these students describe parents/carers reminding them of their chosen path or career, giving them a push or a boost to work harder, rewarding them for achievements and providing them with individual attention. Parental values for education are shown through interest by asking questions and discussion of aspirations/communication of expectations. Although some students appear to have had some disagreements with parents/carers about the PIB they are receiving, for the most part, parents/carers were reported to be flexible and are likely to respond to the changing needs or attitudes of their child.

Trust appears to have an interesting relationship with expectations and student attainment. High parental trust may be likely to give the student the confidence to work independently, find the right path, support motivation and encourage the student to attain highly. However

parental trust and expectations may also have been formed as a result of knowledge of students' previous academic success and so it cannot be stated that high trust causes independence and autonomy, only that there appears to be an association which is potentially bi-directional.

Barriers to PIB can be perceived to be related to parental lack of knowledge, lack of time and/or energy, language barriers but also students themselves. Students have identified their ability in creating a barrier which attempts to control the amount or type of PIB offered. Although students reported that parents/carers felt they were unable to support the student with specialised subject knowledge, some parents/carers who were eager and able to help in other ways offered this support (i.e. with grammar, punctuation, offering to hire a private tutor).

The influence of culture on PIB was addressed by only three students but these findings offered interesting insights into expectations and traditions. Age/stage related student expectations are important in the drive towards ownership for learning. Students gain a sense of satisfaction and pride from having independence in their studies and enjoy the freedoms that college-level study can bring. Students assert themselves when necessary but are also likely to reflect their parental aspirations for attainment outcomes or careers.

The Typology Table (4.9) notes no significant influences/experiences that are seen to relate specifically to attainment. The extent of students' agreement of involvement resulting in higher grades relates more to the relationships with parents/carers than it does to PIB and attainment. Students who agree that more parental involvement would result in higher grades also note high parental aspirations and expectations as drivers of extrinsic motivation. However, aspirations and expectations are noted by some students across all categories of attainment in Table 4.9, suggesting that these aspects do not associate directly with outcomes.

For some students, the important role of the lecturer or tutor is highlighted, suggesting that in some cases, parental involvement has less impact than lecturer/tutor involvement at this age and stage of education.

PIBs are not predictable but can be responsive, reactive or absent. There appears to be a plethora of support systems for students in FE, ranging from full-on controlling surveillance DAPSS measures, through to parents/carers who offer a range of support when needed (offering a safe place/safety net), moving to parents/carers who are reported to communicate positive aspirations, expectations and values but support solely on a practical level (e.g. cooking meals). There also appears to be a small number of parents who reportedly fail to take any interest in their children's emotional or practical needs, should they require it or not. Some students do not reside in the family home and see themselves as completely independent, others have broken, weak or absent relationships with parents/carers. For students in this small group who require support, important connections are reported to have been made with college teaching staff who offer an emotional safety net when this has reportedly failed to be provided by parents.

Motivation is seen to underpin all models in the diagram. (The 'elements of motivation' diagram (Figure 4.5) shows how the other important factors described by students relate to each other and so can influence motivation).

Lecturers are important in supporting students across all categories due to a high level of specific subject knowledge at level 3. For students in the 'Dismissed' category, college lecturers and tutors also take on an important role in emotional support, where one-to-one tutorials were appreciated by the students.

Although students in 'Authoritised PEAV' and 'Headstrong' categories appeared to gain higher grades, this cannot be viewed to be a parenting style that is inductive to attainment, since these findings were representative of a minority of students. However, a key finding for these categories relates to motivation where 'Authoritised PEAV' is very high on extrinsic motivation and 'Headstrong' is very high on intrinsic motivation.

The impact of ethnicity was difficult to pin point for questionnaires and focus groups because there were no obvious differences in behaviours noted by students of different ethnicities and it was not specifically referred to in the answers provided. The interviews highlighted that few parental choices for PIB are rooted in cultural expectations (although this is not noted across all students with the same ethnic background) which is why this is seen to be an influence that *can* affect all categories but is difficult to isolate.

Course and gender associated significantly with student outcomes. Health and Social Care, followed by Construction, Outdoor Education and Business displayed the highest level of student outcomes and on average, female students outperformed male students across the cohort of participants. Students showed most agreement with positive parenting behaviours and knowledge of mother's academic achievement had associations with higher outcomes.

The statement choosing focus group exercise revealed that for the most part, students understood the meaning of the statements (and from the qualitative data were able to explain their choices in detail). Statements 4d and 5d were taken out of the analysis as they were not seen to be reliably understood by students. Out of all the statements chosen in this activity, 94 percent of statements were not chosen in an opposing set, suggesting that students did not often choose statements which were designed to contradict one another which supports the validity of the statement content. All statements were chosen at least once (which demonstrates that all were useful) and there was not one statement that was chosen by all students. This is important as it displays the large array of perspectives in relation to parental involvement and shows that the statements are likely to capture PIB. When asked whether any more statements should be added, students were unable to offer any more suggestions for PIB.

Students showed most agreement with PIB that related to:

a. Independence
b. Trust
c. Respect

d. Expectation to do well at college
e. High value of education from both parent and student

Students showed least agreement with the PIB that related to:

f. Parental control
g. A reliance on parents/carers
h. Unwanted parental input
i. Parental pressure
j. Parental choice
k. Low value of education (both parent and student)

Internal consistency was apparent for each of the PIB groups: DAPSS, PAPSS, PEAV and NEAV, which confirms the justification for the use of Likert scales within this project (see section 3.3.1.4). However, combining DAPSS with NEAV and PAPSS with PEAV showed an even higher level of internal consistency.

Although agreement for PAPSS statements is associated with agreement for PEAV and agreement with DAPSS statements is associated with agreement for NEAV statements as seen in the Cronbach Alpha test, CFA reveals that the association is slightly more complicated. Statements 4c, 4e, 4f, 4g of DAPSS form a group of their own along with one NEAV statement (7b) and the remaining DAPSS statements (4a, 4b and 4c) associate with the first three PAPSS statements (5a, 5b and 5c). However, Factor 3 is made up of 4 PEAV statements (8a, 8c, 8d and 8e) and Factor 4 is made up of 3 NEAV statements (7a, 7b, 7c), which reflects the initial groupings, but omits some of the behaviours in the initial groups (8b and 7d, 7e, respectively). Multinominal Logistic Regression found that Factors 1 and 4 associate significantly with low outcomes. Students who report parental interference, pressure, lack of trust and low expectations and low aspirations associate with lower UCAS points scores.

Although individual statements analysed in RQ2 did offer insight into statistically significant associations with attainment for some positive behavioural attributes (i.e. trust, respect, expectations and parental inspiration – which mirrored some of PAPSS and some of PEAV)

these behaviours did not specifically group together during the CFA process in RQ4 (i.e. they do not relate to each other enough to form a factor). In other words, these behaviours appear to be more nuanced than the separate statements and although they are seen to associate with outcomes separately, they do not appear together in reality. This means that a link between these positive behavioural attributes *as a style* and higher attainment is unlikely to be seen in practice. On the contrary, when analysed individually, some behavioural attributes which could be viewed as 'negative' associate significantly with lower average outcomes (i.e. pressure, lack of trust, parental interference, lack of ownership and low expectations). Additionally, when analysed using CFA, these statements group together to create Factor 1 and, as could be predicted, Factor 1 has a statistically significant association with low student outcomes.

Most importantly, although these behaviours have been re-grouped to create four new factors (categories) of PIB, they do not suggest that students are only experiencing PIB from *one* of the factors – merely that these behaviours relate to each other. Additionally, the only statistically significant associations with outcomes occur for Factors 1 and 4 ('Untrusting interference with pressure and low expectations' and 'Low expectations in educational outcomes and no clear parental aspirations', respectively) which associate with lower outcomes. PIB did not differ significantly across age, ethnic group, gender or course. There were a small minority of students highlighted in research aim two who, although reported to experience DAPSS, actually gained higher average outcomes than for students who did not report these controlling behaviours. The qualitative exploration of student perceptions allowed opportunity for this to be explored which resulted in the final model produced in response to research aim four.

Chapter Five: Discussion and triangulation of findings

This project investigated student perceptions of Parental Involvement Behaviours (PIB) and had four research questions. It looked at aspects of reported PIB considered to be important to students for influencing attainment at college and explored whether these contrasted with college guidance and Ofsted requirements (RQ1). It investigated whether student attainment associated with PIB or student age, gender, cultural capital, ethnicity or course (RQ2) and whether these factors affected the way that students described/reported their PIB (RQ3). Lastly, it identified distinct models of student experiences (in regard to PIB) and reviewed their association with attainment (RQ4).

Overall, the study found that individual PIB did not associate with attainment, except for those behaviours which related to the reactive hypothesis and so cannot be viewed or reported as a direct influence for attainment. Most students sought opportunities for independence in order to express their intrinsic motivation and the factors of age, gender, ethnicity and course had little relevance in relation to reported PIB. Most students appreciated parental trust and emotional support but did not find parental surveillance techniques helpful. The most important finding (and one that can be used to further research in this area of FE) is the six distinct models of students' experience expressed in the LoID (Figure 4.7).

In this chapter data is cross-analysed where appropriate and key findings are highlighted and discussed. This chapter has two purposes. It seeks to:

a) Combine findings gathered from three different tools (encompassing both quantitative and qualitative data) to highlight a holistic view of parental involvement for this mixed methods study
b) Discuss and situate the findings within wider parental involvement research and sociological and psychological theory.

The decision to focus the discussion on cross-analysed data is justified because:

a) triangulation techniques have strengthened the validity of these findings
b) the focus must concentrate on exploring the agreement/disagreement between data sets to take full advantage of the mixed-methods approach to the study

This chapter provides evidence of triangulation between data sets where appropriate and is structured into four main parts for clarity which reflects each research question. The first discussion is based around student motivation and emotional support from parents/carers as a main overarching influence (section 5.1), since students reported these aspects to underpin student attainment in the qualitative analysis and relates to RQ1. Section 5.2 relates to RQ2 which includes responses to individual PIB statements and links attainment. It also discusses the relationships between age, gender, cultural capital and ethnicity and attainment. Section 5.3 relates to differences in response to PIB statements based on four factors: age, gender, ethnic group and course which answers RQ3. The final section which is heavily triangulated responds to RQ4 where data gathered using a mix of tools is analysed and compared to identify how students have reported parenting styles through both qualitative and quantitative responses and how these styles are mapped on to attainment. For clarity, these four parts are set out below and the research questions answered by each part are indicated in brackets:

Part one: Section 5.1 ‘The importance of motivation and emotional support’ (RQ1)

Part two: Section 5.2: ‘Reported PIB, factors (age, ethnicity, gender, course, cultural capital) and attainment’ (RQ2)

Part three: Section 5.3: ‘PIB across age, ethnic group, gender and course’ (RQ3)

Part four: Section 5.4: ‘Exploration of parenting styles and attainment’ (RQ4).

Chapter five attempts to explain the links between quantitative data and qualitative findings. Specifically, in discussing RQ4 (section 5.4) where slight differences are found between data

sets, it explains possible reasons for this whilst finding agreement or disagreement with existing literature. The decision to use triangulation techniques across research tools is reflective of the nature of a mixed-methods approach to this study where both quantitative and qualitative findings are deemed as important in creating a rich picture of student perception of parental involvement. To this end, the final model (see Figure 4.7) which has been developed through knowledge of quantitative data and undertaking thematic analysis, is referred to throughout this chapter because the answers to the research questions before it (RQ1,2 and 3) are seen to culminate in and contribute to the development of this model, which is presented as a finding for RQ4. Naturally, there are links between the research questions as they are exploring a similar topic.

As this study is unique in its approach to exploring reported PIB in FE, not all findings can be contrasted/compared to existing research, due to lack of specific research in this area. This is not seen as a negative element. If findings from this study have not been recognised in existing literature, then this justifies the completion of the current project and demonstrates a clear contribution to knowledge.

5.1 The importance of motivation, positive relationships, emotional support, responsiveness, role modelling and independence (RQ1)

As was seen in the hierarchies created in Chapter Four (Figures 4.2 and 4.3), motivation (both extrinsic and intrinsic) was seen to underpin and connect all other influencing factors that students reported, making it the overarching theme for the current project and fulfilling research aim one. As can be seen in the chapter below, there are many factors that can affect motivation (both extrinsic and intrinsic). Although the hierarchy for extrinsic motivation includes a larger variety of factors than the intrinsic hierarchy, it does not follow that extrinsic motivation has more influence on attainment. Additionally, it does not follow that extrinsic motivation was seen as more important to students – merely that the questions posed by the researcher were mainly focused on the external influence of PIB. Indeed, most scholars identify that factors that foster intrinsic motivation are more likely to result in higher student

outcomes (Skinner, Johnston and Synder, 2005; Suissa, 2013; Froiland, Mayor and Herlevi, 2015; Henry, Cavanagh and Oetting, 2011; Marchant et al, 2001; Chen and Ho, 2012; Fan, Williams and Wolters, 2012; Weiner, 1985 and Lareau, 2011). However, certain PIB were identified to foster intrinsic motivation. For the current study these mostly related to high expectations, aspirations, values and trust for student success (as also noted by Fan, Williams and Wolters, 2012). Nevertheless, the link between these elements and student attainment is not a simple one. There are many factors at play in regard to parental communication of these ideas and behaviours developed over time, for which the current study could not explore in detail since it did not have the option of being longitudinal. The academic trajectory noted by Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) is likely to be developed early on in a child's life and is likely to underpin many of these future student beliefs, as can be seen in the following sections. The finding that intrinsic motivation is reported to be a highly important influence for attainment in FE (above other external factors, such as individual PIB) moves the field forward in thinking about the distinctions between effective (or helpful) PIB for different ages and stages of learner. Intrinsic motivation is likely to be cultivated in students throughout their educational journey (see Lareau, 2011) and in FE, appears to be more influential for student attainment than any other individual behavioural parental influence (such as asking about work, using surveillance techniques or checking on due dates for work). However, students were not specifically asked about *intrinsic* motivation using the research tools (nevertheless students were questioned in the interviews about what motivates them (in general) to work hard). This means two things:

1) Despite the use of pre-defined PIB statements (aligning with the post-positivist stance adopted for the current study) the researcher did not pre-conceive that the specific topic of intrinsic motivation would be important to students (and so did not plan for it to feature specifically in the research tools). This suggests that the data collection tools had validity (i.e. they measured student responses in relation to

influences for attainment) but were also reliable since the idea of intrinsic motivation appeared across responses in focus groups, questionnaires and interviews.

2) As intrinsic motivation is seen as central to attainment in FE above other factors of external influence, then if this topic is ever researched further with FE students, they should be asked directly about this form of motivation to gather more information on this important aspect in FE.

To support high student outcomes, it has been suggested that parents/carers must show responsiveness to their child's needs (Baumrind, 2013; Dumont et al, 2014 and Morris, Cui and Steinberg, 2013), be supportive of independence (Maccoby and Martin, 1983) and not attempt to closely supervise or place high demands on learners as this may result in rebellious behaviour (Baumrind, 1966). Erikson (1995) also suggested that in the period of adolescence, students are experiencing a process of identity formation which can also be demonstrated through rebellious behaviour and parents/carers must be responsive to their needs to support a positive outcome for the student. Although prior student attainment is seen to affect parents' attitude towards their child, the qualitative findings in the current study suggest that PIBs are much more likely to be influenced by other factors (than merely formative feedback) such as the deep understandings in the student-parent relationship and whether the student chooses to disclose their worries or formative grades, trust and wider expectations. Qualitative findings indicated that the majority of students report that parents/carers will continue to view their role as an observer or gentle facilitator (i.e. most students have asserted/communicated their drive for independence and freedom to make choices as has been demonstrated by the 'Supposed' and 'Clarified' Independence models in the LoID). This is reflective of Boonk et al's (2018) meta-analysis for students aged 12-18 years which found that adolescents mainly favour emotional support such as encouragement, support and educational discussions rather than parental pressure, control and interference. However, there is one main difference between Boonk et al's (2018) findings and those for the current study. As noted in the LoID (Figure 4.7), there is one distinct model of student experience (Clarified Independence) in which students report to

favour minimal parental involvement where they do not refer to educational discussions, encouragement and emotional support. This appears to disagree with Boonk et al's (2018) work which, unlike the current study, did not specifically include FE students. This may be because many students in this model did attain highly, despite not having regular educational discussions, encouragement and emotional support. Therefore, these findings appear to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the realm of FE and reported parental involvement influences in comparison to the broad category of adolescence, as recognised by the Boonk et al (2018) findings.

Student responsiveness (i.e. the way students are capable of determining and managing the PIB they receive) was identified as a key aspect of appreciated (i.e. positively discussed) PIB for students. Responsiveness was also identified as important by Briley, Harden and Tucker-Drob (2014), Dumont et al (2014), Baumrind (2013) and Morris, Cui and Steinberg (2013). However, as with the current project, these scholars did not necessarily find responsiveness to associate with attainment but instead found it to associate with particular styles of parenting. Indeed, this reflects the finding that individual behaviours do not appear to determine opportunities for student attainment overall, but that flexible support (i.e. support that changes with student need) is appreciated and experienced by most students. Here we see a distinction between what students view as effective but what does not appear to be effective within the reality of influencing or associating with student attainment. This is important to note and links to the way in which the study is framed around and focussed on gathering reported student perceptions (i.e. students articulated their own PIB). It may be the case that responsiveness could not be associated to attainment in the current project because responsiveness is reported by the majority of students who (understandably) have a mix of grades. Indeed, those students who do not report to experience responsiveness attempt to exert their independence in other ways, which again links to the overall findings for RQ1 in relation to motivation and ownership for study at this level of FE education.

However, some students do acknowledge their appreciation for emotional support shown through interest, rather than controlling behaviours. Emotional support can be given through parental interest and frequent communication. General parental interest (through social and cultural communication) was found by Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman (2013) to associate with higher outcomes for students aged fifteen. Parental interest was not specifically measured and analysed against attainment for the current study but has links with students who report positive relationships with their parents/carers. The positive ways in which a parent can contribute to achievement have been found to include offering emotional support alongside practical support and helping whilst communicating positive beliefs about the child (Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack, 2007; Knollmann and Wild, 2007 and Katz, Kapian and Buzukashvily, 2011) which links to positive relationships between parent/carer and child. However, the current project did not specifically share this finding. This may be due to the differences in how positive relationships were reported. Additionally, most students in the study reported positive relationships and emotional support techniques (which were available when required), so an association with attainment was not evident for the current cohort. Emotional support offered through the PAPSS behaviours of encouragement, providing guidance when asked, parental willingness to talk and the idea of a safety net were noted by students more often than the behaviours relating to pressure, control and interference in the qualitative data. Emotional support and academic encouragement through parental discussions were found by Boonk et al, (2018) to associate with higher outcomes for adolescents aged 12-18 years. Emotional support was not specifically measured in relation to attainment in the current study, although it was commonly mentioned by students as a helpful parental behaviour. This might be viewed as a limitation to the study and in future PIB work in FE it is recommended that researchers attempt to measure emotional support in some way. Despite this, aspects that relate to emotional support are commonly seen in the 'Supposed Independence' category in the LoID (Figure 4.7) which includes a mix of grades and so is not reflective of Boonk et al's (2018) findings. This may be due to a difference in age group between the current study (16-26

years) and the review by Boonk et al, (2018) (12-18 years) although some crossover is evident.

Most students, even if they reported DAPSS behaviours were likely to have positive perceptions about their relationships with their parents/carers. For two MoSE, ('Dismissed' and 'Headstrong'), relationships with parents/carers were seen to be weak or absent but for students who also lacked intrinsic motivation and were effectively 'Dismissed' (where students reported being ignored or rejected), lower outcomes were gained. Relationships and performance were not specifically measured quantitatively by the current study. However, overall, 47 percent of students surveyed claimed to have knowledge of their mother's grades (see section 5.2.2) and this was associated with higher average outcomes for this group than for the group who claimed to have no knowledge. Knowledge of mother's achievements may stimulate intrinsic motivation in students who then aspire to achieve as highly (if not more highly) than their mother but also may have links with role modelling where students reported to look up to /respect their mothers and so may be a form of extrinsic motivation which drives students to aim for higher grades (as identified in the EoM diagram – see Figure 4.5) and as identified by Bandura (1976). Role modelling was also discussed in the qualitative data and was mostly related to mothers, rather than fathers. Additionally, role modelling and maternal influences may also be reflective of close relationships. Parents/carers who feel like they have a positive relationship with their child may be more likely to share details of their academic history. When Paulson and Sputa (1996) asked adolescent students about their perceptions of involvement, students identified that mothers are much more likely to have involvement than fathers. Close relationships between parents/carers (although not split into mothers and fathers) and students were identified in the qualitative data and included in the RD diagram (see Figure 4.4) under 'Internal Family Factors' as they were seen to influence the student, which may indirectly affect performance, but the qualitative data did not specifically question students about their knowledge of their mother's academic achievement. Close relationships may also be likely to

influence the emotional support provided by parents/carers, which again was a recurring theme in the qualitative data and appears in ‘Internal family factors’ of the RD diagram (see Figure 4.4). Despite close relationships appearing to associate with higher outcomes, those ‘Headstrong’ students (see Figure 4.7) who have intrinsic motivation gained higher outcomes despite reporting weak parental/carer relationships, where tutor-student communication becomes increasingly important for students who experience this model.

The emotional climate in terms of the relationship between a parent/carer and their children was noted by Darling and Steinberg (1993) who argued that parenting styles should not be viewed as the sum of particular behaviours. This suggests that understanding of parenting styles should not be fully reliant on the quantitative analysis procedures (i.e. Categorical Factor Analysis – see RQ4) but emphasises the importance of collecting rich qualitative data in relation to student perception of relationships, as has been achieved in the current study. Although responsiveness overall has been noted as an important characteristic in terms of parental behaviour, it seems that parental responses to learners are likely to segregate into six types of experience based on overarching elements/influences. However, within those categories, subtle differences may be present which account for differences in the emotional climates. Indeed, parenting styles do not exist in isolation and both affect and are affected by current relationship perceptions of parent and student which link to student assertiveness and the finding that students are able to move between models reflecting a continuum. As an example, those experiencing ‘Authoritised PEAV’ (see Figure 4.7) can effectively assert themselves, take more control of their PIB and move into the ‘Supposed Independence’ MoSE. Similarly, research by Morris, Cui and Steinberg (2013) has indicated that the emotional climate of the relationship is related to parental responsiveness of their children’s emotions and is a leading factor in determining parenting styles. This suggests that a parenting style is not necessarily inflexible but can be moulded and altered based on factors such as relationships, personalities and emotional development at any one time. Interestingly, although relationships and emotional support have been referred to by

students across research tools, it is unclear how this associates with attainment in the MoSE, since most students report positive relationships but attain a mix of grades. It is difficult to fully understand the social, personal and emotional factors involved in each student-parent/carer relationship as all are likely to be slightly different, although six MoSE have been identified (see Figure 4.7).

Authoritative parenting, (as identified by Baumrind, 2013) includes sensitivity to children's needs as well as respect for autonomy (Bagby and Sulak, 2015) which relates to the idea of responsiveness, identified as important in the current study. Bandura also notes the influence of responsiveness as he discusses the term 'differential reactions' (Bandura, 1976, p.137) where behaviours can be shaped through (in this case) parental reactions. Pomerantz and Eaton (2001) too noted that children's academic outcomes were seen to predict parental involvement in the home up to 6 months later, suggesting that students themselves have the ability to change parental behaviours, just as parents/carers may attempt to shape student behaviours. Despite responsiveness being viewed as important to many students, the current study did not find specific associations with it and attainment. Where students were asked to predict a change of parental behaviour in response to student grades, an association with actual outcomes was not evident. In other words, students who believe that parents/carers would alter their behaviour in response to grades perform in similar ways to students who believe their parents/carers would not alter their behaviour. This suggests that perception of parental responsiveness to grades does not associate with outcomes. However, responsiveness in relation to flexibility to student needs was seen for the majority of students and was sought after where it was not evident. 'Headstrong' students were able to achieve highly, despite lack of reported parental responsiveness to needs and where parents were deemed to be responsive, students attained a mix of grades.

RQ1 also asked whether any PIB were reported as problematic for students. In this study, close relationships with parents/carers were not seen to specifically associate with high outcomes. However, weak parental relationships (where other support networks are not

evident) is seen to associate with lower outcomes for students in the 'Dismissed' MoSE. Indeed, lecturer-student support is needed here to support these students and relationships with peers become more important at college stage, as echoed by Scheck (2014). These students report to be frustrated by lack of attention and blame parents/carers for not giving them the attention they expected. Surveillance measures and parental behaviours which were deemed to be untrusting (for example nagging, trying to intervene) were largely (i.e. for the majority of students) received negatively by students. Similarly, Boonk at al's (2018) secondary research analysing twenty-five parental involvement studies over the past fifteen years found that pressure, control, interference, checking or controlling homework was associated with negative outcomes for adolescent students aged 12-18 and the current study's findings concur with this. The effect of these behaviours on attainment specifically is discussed in more detail in section 5.2.5.

RQ1 also asked whether students' view of PIB were different to or in agreement with college guidance, Ofsted (2016) requirements and policy-maker perception. In regard to independence and student ownership in FE, Table 4.3 shows mainly discrepancies between the various parties involved, although there is some agreement between Ofsted and the Director of Quality and Standards (DQS). Ofsted (2016) and the DQS agree on keeping the parents/carers informed of attendance and progress. However, Ofsted (2016) mention parents/carers in relation to the college's duty to keep them informed of formative attainment and attendance, rather than offering expectation as to the parents'/carers' role in relation to supporting the student inside or outside college. This is to be predicted, since Ofsted (2016) cannot claim to make recommendations for parental/carer behaviours within the home, unlike the DQS who was interviewed. However, the underlying notion is that, informing parents/carers about the progress of learners will result in their involvement which may not be sought after by the student. Indeed, at this level the parent/carer is unlikely to have subject knowledge which can support the student in the progress they are making. This view also differs from communication in the college prospectus (College X, 2018) which suggests

that one of the purposes of college level study is that students become mature and independent learners, suggesting that they should take the lead on their progress, without the surveillance or pressure of parents/carers who have been informed of their progress. This section specifically is reflective of and concurs with the student voice in relation to autonomy, ownership and independence.

The DQS is clear in her view that parents/carers must be involved and should be actively encouraging students to study for an additional 12 hours per week outside of college lesson time and is clear in her opinion that achievement can be maximised with support from parents/carers, specifically through surveillance techniques and reminders for work that is due. On the contrary, students largely do not report that this type of involvement is likely to have positive effects on their attainment and they seek parental trust, ownership for their work, respect and parental responsiveness (see section 4.2). Students do not claim to have all the answers and largely report to appreciate emotional support. However, they are clear about the responsibility they have to their work and their need for a parental safety net (which is available *on student request)* and involves emotional support techniques such as asking how the student is or offering gentle suggestions as to where the student could gain help or information (signposting). Reasons for the discrepancy between students' views and the DQS is potentially affected by a difference in background and experience of education. For example, the DQS is extremely well educated and has a high social standing in terms of status, and most likely has a middle-class up-bringing. Her experiences of her own parental involvement in relation to concerted cultivation, high expectations and aspirations are likely to be different to the majority of learners with the FE college. Her views are represented during the interview where she is very clear about the many advantages that parental involvement can bring (including directive types of involvement – see section 4.2.4). She communicates a very positive view of parental involvement for FE learners both through the interview and the college parental involvement strategy. The DQS's specific viewpoint underpins the creation of the policy document, which appears to fail to address or

understand the reported experiences of FE students (see section 4.2.4). The policy communicates that parental support techniques are likely to be advantageous, based on the DQS's own positive experiences, rather than through an investigation and an understanding of student experiences and student perceptions regarding the perceived optimum PIB.

Lastly, intrinsic motivation was seen to be important for progress and students suggest that this can be reduced by overpowering and interfering parental involvement for students who seek autonomy and the chance to make their own choices. Student autonomy and ownership here is related to Erikson's (1995) ideas surrounding adolescent development and the path of each student in determining their identity. Due to parental involvement perceptions in FE being an under-researched area, there is no additional literature that can be used here to elaborate the points made, and so further enhances the contribution to knowledge of the current project.

5.2 Reported PIB, factors (age, ethnicity, gender, course, cultural capital) and attainment (RQ2)

5.2.1 Expectations, trust (shown by respect for student choices), aspirations and values

The findings in the current study in response to research aim two suggest that experiences and perceptions of expectations, aspirations and values might be built up over time, rather than being influential specifically at FE level of study. Although parental behaviours may change practically upon enrolment at college, students are likely to be reporting perceptions relating to expectations, aspirations and values as a culmination of ideas throughout their years of experience and individual current parental behaviours may be seen as less influential. Often, expectations are associated with aspirations and values for education under the umbrella term 'academic socialisation', which has been described as the most significant factor in relation to attainment (Lam and Ducreux, 2013). Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) specified that academic socialisation *throughout a child's life* was also the most significant factor which can be linked to attainment, specifically for adolescents. This

idea is important, since it reflects the findings for the current study and provides a deeper understanding of the distinctions between recent influences for learners at FE level and behaviours that may have fostered intrinsic motivation throughout the learner's younger years which is expressed most prominently during this stage of study.

When explored as separate items (statements), parental aspirations, expectations and trust (also shown through respect for student choices) showed association with attainment in RQ2. However, when these items were explored using CFA in RQ4, they did not group together to form a parenting style and this is therefore an unexpected finding. This may be because the CFA only accounted for 62.5 percent of the variance in responses and so may be due to individual variations. The LoID, on the other hand (also developed in response to RQ4), used qualitative findings to explore models of student experiences; one of which ('Clarified Independence') showed all these behaviours in a group. Interestingly, when formed as a group (collectively), these parental behaviours did not associate specifically with the highest grades and reflected a mix of moderate to high grades. This demonstrates that parental involvement is nuanced and can be affected by (possibly unknown or unreported) additional factors which have not been captured in the current study. Additionally, it shows the benefits of completing qualitative investigation to deepen or modify understanding of quantitative data, which is an advantage of this mixed-methods study.

Quantitative data found that students who strongly agreed that their parents/carers expected or trusted them to succeed in education over their lifetime gained significantly higher grades (statistically) than those students who did not strongly agree, although this was based on a response to one item (PIB statement). Similarly, where students reported parents/carers to be unsure of how they would perform at college or succeed in education in general, students gained statistically significantly lower outcomes. This suggests that students' perceptions of their parents'/carers' expectations has associations with attainment. This is reflective of findings by Boonk et al, (2018) who claimed that high expectations, aspirations and values (shown through academic discussions and encouragement) were linked with high student

outcomes for students in adolescence (12-18). However, when students discussed expectations in the qualitative findings (as well as relating to autonomy, age and responsibility), it seemed to be linked with prior student attainment. In other words, if students had previous poor outcomes, parents/carers would be less likely to expect (or trust) them to suddenly start achieving and so parental involvement is often displayed as a reaction to students' previous academic success. This reflects the reactive hypothesis, as highlighted (and explored in the literature review) by Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman, 2013). It also echoes findings by Gronlnich et al (2002) and Dumont et al (2014) and links to the problem of causation when reviewing the influences on attainment identified by Dumont et al, (2014) Greene (2015), Farkas (2014) Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) Pomerantz and Eaton (2001) Shumow (2014) and Hamlin (2014). This finding allows for a deeper understanding of the cautiousness which should be applied by future researchers when they claim to be measuring cause and effect, particularly when referring to the influences of parental involvement on attainment.

In the LoID this is echoed for a minority of students within the 'Dismissed' and 'Authoritised NE-PAV' models of student experience who reported low or non-communicated expectations and who were likely to attain poorly. However, the majority of students appear to reflect the 'Supposed' and 'Clarified' Independence MoSE which relate to age, student motivation, autonomy, trust, independence and student responsibility where a mixture of moderate to high grades was apparent. As the finding that 'higher expectations are associated with higher grades' is based on an *average* outcome, it would seem reasonable that, although there are a mix of grades within the two main models, overall outcomes in these models are higher than for the average outcomes within the 'Dismissed' and 'Authoritised NE-PAV' models which are likely to be very low (and these students reported low expectations) and so demonstrates the connections between the quantitative data and qualitative findings. The theme of 'parental expectations' was featured in the EoM (Figure 4.5), the IASO (Figure 4.6) and the RD (Figure 4.4), signalling its importance for students when discussing perceptions

of PIB. Within the 'EoM' diagram it is associated with age, responsibility and ownership for learning. It was also seen as a key feature of the 'IASO' diagram coupled with student age and was identified as an 'internal family factor' (i.e. influence) in the RD diagram. These figures are important as they display student perceptions particularly for learners in FE which adds to the limited body of research that currently exists in this area of FE. Even if the ideas in these diagrams cannot be generalised (due to the case-study nature of this study) they can aid future research in FE.

Existing research into parental involvement identifies that high expectations are likely to associate with high grades (Kim, 2014; Ceballo et al, 2014; Lareau, 2011; Carolan, 2015; Robinson and Harris, 2014; Bourdieu, 2010; Huang and Gove, 2015; Chen and Ho, 2012; Desforges, 2003; Fan and Chen, 2001; Bagby and Sulak, 2015; Hill and Tyson, 2009 and Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). This association, however, cannot be reported as a correlation, since there may be other factors at play. Students' previous academic performance may influence parental expectations in a process called 'causal ambiguity' (Briley, Harden and Tucker-Drob, 2014, p.2616) and this idea is reflected in the current study. A link between high expectations and high attainment is presented for those individual behaviours, but if parents/carers have experienced their children gaining high grades throughout their schooling, then the communication of high expectations could be predicted at college level, as the parent(s) trust(s) their child to perform highly. There is no reason to suggest that high expectations in themselves will influence attainment within the parent/carer – student relationship where knowledge of attainment has been tracked over time. This shows the link between expectations, trust and outcomes but also warns against assuming that high expectations in themselves have the ability to influence outcomes. In reality, the process is likely to be more nuanced and relate to other influences such as social and cultural capital, outsider influences (such as PIB and peers) and intrinsic student motivation.

Here it is also important to mention that students themselves are likely to have expectations for their performance at college. Bandura (1977) believes that students have knowledge of

their own capabilities to behave in such a way as to produce positive outcomes through a process called 'self-efficacy' and this links to student choices in how they respond to the challenges they face. Self-efficacy is likely to be shaped and developed through external influences such as observation and guidance. In the current project, this is seen to have associations with elements of Lareau's (2011) idea of concerted cultivation which is developed over time and feeds in to intrinsic motivation, as seen in the hierarchy of intrinsic motivation (Figure 4.3). This also links to stage setting (Robinson and Harris, 2014), production and maintenance of a life space (see Chapter Two).

Trust was a key theme for the qualitative data and was linked with respect for student choices, enrolment at college, age and related expectation, previous academic performance and independence. However, although trust and expectations were linked, some subtle differences were noted. Some students who reported to be in the 'Authoritised PEAV' MoSE had parents/carers with high expectations for their children, but they were not reported to trust them to work independently, and hence displayed DAPSS behaviours to pressure them into achieving. In the quantitative data, 76 percent of students either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: 'My parents/carers do not trust me to get on with work myself' (which can be seen across the 'Supposed Independence' and 'Clarified Independence' MoSE which make up the majority of students) with a smaller group reporting that they 'neither agree nor disagree'. Interestingly, a minority of students (7 percent) who *agree* with this statement have higher average outcomes than those who disagree. This appears to be reflective of the findings in the LoID where approximately 6 percent of students who experience the 'Authoritised PEAV' (low trust) model and 3 percent who experience the 'Headstrong' (trust not openly communicated) model perform highly, despite reporting low or confused parental trust. However, Silinkas et al, (2015) identifies that where mothers did not trust children to work autonomously, lower outcomes were gained. Again, this is likely to relate to parental knowledge of past student performance and a lack of trust in student ability, rather than being a consequence of PIB. However, for the current study, a minority of

students appear responsive to their parents'/carers' behaviours and seek to work hard in response to parental pressure and were still able to attain highly, which challenges these findings. Suggestions for the difference in finding for the Silinkas et al (2015) study are:

a) Silinkas et al centred research around mother's perceptions, rather than children's perceptions
b) Silinkas et al took only quantitative measures using a Likert Scale and sets of items and did not seek to interrogate the data qualitatively.

However, for the majority of students, parental trust was associated with higher outcomes in the quantitative data where students who agreed/strongly agreed that their parents/carers trusted them gained statistically significant higher outcomes and represented the majority of students (81 percent). The smaller groups of students who have reported low parental trust have lower *average* grades. The word average is important here: 'Headstrong' and 'Authoritised PEAV' perform highly and yet do not report to experience trust but the 'Dismissed' and 'Authoritised NE-PAV' have low trust and gain very low grades. Here, the average grade is pulled down by the 'Dismissed' and the 'Authoritised NE-PAV' MoSE. Parental trust was also identified across the two main MoSE: 'Supposed Independence' and 'Clarified Independence' and, although these models are likely to identify with learners who have a mix of grades, the average grades across these categories are higher than for the 'Dismissed' model and the 'Authoritised NE-PAV' model which have low trust and are associated with very low grades, which demonstrates how the same results are evident across quantitative data and qualitative findings. This suggests that although trust is important, it may be that other influences are more important (i.e. responsiveness of parents/carers and emotional support) which are evident in the two main MoSE.

Where parents'/carers' aspirations were not realistic, this pressure resulted in anxiety and frustration in learners and was associated with lower results. In the current study, shared knowledge and understanding of student ability in relation to past performance may be seen to influence parental aspirations as well as past parental opportunities and experiences. As

an example, one interviewee claimed that her father had been unable to continue with his education in Ghana due to lack of money and so he had high aspirations for her to fulfil a goal that was out of his grasp. The quantitative data found that generally students who disagreed that their parents/carers had inspired them to work hard to gain the job they wanted, performed less highly than those who agreed. This finding is reflected in the LoID for the 'Dismissed' model where low aspirations are likely to be associated with lower outcomes. Similarly, for a small proportion of students who experienced 'Authoritised PEAV' outcomes were likely to be high. However, high parental aspirations do not always appear to associate with high attainment. This finding is reflected in existing research since high aspirations have been seen to be strong predictors for influencing student achievement (Fan and Chen, 2001). However, as found in the current study, Murayama et al (2015) and Espinoza (2015) warned that the aspirations must be realistic and achievable. Interestingly, the quantitative data found a small percentage of students who strongly disagreed that their parents/carers had inspired them to work hard towards a career and yet these students gained high average outcomes. These students appear to be reflected in the LoID in the 'Headstrong' MoSE (which account for 3 percent of students), since parents/carers are reported to fail to clearly communicate high aspirations and yet students attain highly. This relates to intrinsic motivation which is seen as a key influence in the current study.

Student motivation at the college stage appears to be more of an influence than PIB per se and intrinsic motivation is likely to be influenced by parental attitudes which are communicated over time. This is also reflected in parental aspirations that are fulfilled through a process of concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2011 and Carolan, 2015) where parents/carers shape their children's attitudes by communicating their values over time. Concerted cultivation also has links with socio-economic status as will be discussed in the following section. Mead (1934) also identifies that individuals are shaped by experiences over time. He argues that due to the strong influences of a family group, perceptions are difficult to remove from the historical home-context and are ingrained in a student's

perception about themselves as they contribute to the development of self-concept which can underpin intrinsic motivation, as was seen in the current study in the 'hierarchy of intrinsic motivation'. The idea of parental influence in determining their child's self-concept was also advocated by Lucas (2010) who claimed that it had direct implications for student attainment. Additionally, parenting styles which promoted 'perceived academic control' (which encourages students to feel that they are capable of learning and that outcomes of schooling are not random but can be controlled) and the formation of a positive 'self-concept' within the student was identified by Chen and Ho (2012). They discovered a positive link between this type of approach and positive student outcomes. However positive self-concept was not specifically measured in the current study.

Values for education were highlighted through student perception of parents/carers who show specific interest in their activities at college by asking questions and discussing the advantages of qualifications. High values were noted for students in the 'Clarified Independence', 'Supposed Independence', 'Authoritised PEAV' and 'Authoritised NE-PAV' MoSE in the LoID. Although not statistically significant with respect to outcomes, 91 percent of students disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement "my parents/carers do not think education is particularly important", leaving the other 9 percent responding with 'neither agree nor disagree', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. This minority of students appears to reflect those in the 'Dismissed' (low outcomes) and 'Headstrong' (high outcomes) models of student experience in the LoID. Values for education were seen as integral to high outcomes (Hill and Tyson, 2009) and the value of qualifications can be seen to be adopted within the students' identity at the age of 18 (Robinson and Harris, 2014). Chen and Ho (2012) too found that academic success is influenced by internalisation of high parental values. Bagby and Sulak (2015) also argue that parents/carers must communicate the importance of education to their children whilst encouraging autonomy in student learning, as recognised specifically in the 'Clarified Independence' model. Conversely, Froiland, Mayor and Herlevi (2015) found that emphasis and encouragement in education through high values was

negatively correlated with achievement and student intellectual curiosity had more influence in outcomes than parental encouragement. One suggestion for this mismatch in findings might be that values are most influential if communicated (like expectations and aspirations) over a period of time and that emphasis and encouragement in education in itself is not enough to influence outcomes without consistent communication. This is echoed by the work of Paulson and Sputa (1996) who found that adolescents' perceived levels of active parenting dropped between the ages of 14-18 but parental educational values did not change. A suggestion here is that if a parent suddenly voiced their opinions of high educational values when their child was post-16 it would be likely that this would have little impact or influence on student attainment, since parental attitudes are most effective if consistently communicated over time or even in the child's earliest years (Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried, 2014).

In the current study, parental values for education were not seen to associate significantly with outcomes for the quantitative data. This may be due to the high percentage of students who report high values (91 percent) and yet have a mix of outcomes at college. Certainly, values for education were high across all models of student PIB experience in the LoID except for the categories of 'Headstrong' and 'Dismissed', so associations with grades could not be fully realised. However, to be influential to student outcomes, values should be communicated consistently by parents/carers over time. Marchant et al, (2001) echoes the view that a supportive parent-child relationship enables students to internalise educational values which are subsequently adopted by the students themselves. It is these values that influence motivation and attainment and are a culmination of experiences throughout the lifetime of the student.

5.2.2 Cultural and economic capital

Bourdieu (1977) discusses these kinds of capital which are seen to reproduce through generations where children inherit material or psychological gains from their parents; specifically, white middle-class parents. The questionnaire asked students to reveal their

parental income. Interestingly, parental income (a predictor of socio-economic status) did not associate significantly with student outcomes in the current study, which contrasts to much of the literature in this area in relation to socio-economic status and attainment for learners below the age of 16 (e.g. Bourdieu, 1977; Desforges, 2003; Lareau 2011 and Carolan, 2015). A UK study by Henderson (2013) found that at GCSE level, economic capital did not predict parenting style or attainment but strategies relating to positive attitudes and behaviours did appear to improve grades. This links with work by Lareau (2011) who claimed that parents with high social capital were likely to engage with their children in highly structured activities named 'concerted cultivation'. This involves the transmission of attitudes, skills and behaviours that influence academic achievement and also has links to the quality of conversation and language use between parent/carer and child which Bernstein (1971) argues gives some children an educational advantage through use of elaborate codes and is linked to the middle classes. Elaborated code language use and additional cultivating behaviours can be seen to be both active (teaching skills that help understanding) and intrinsically motivating (high aspirations, expectations, values, a sense of entitlement and a highly developed sense of self) linking to the formation of their children's self-concept, identified as important by Mead (1934) and Lucas (2010). These ideas are partly reflected in the current study. The active elements of concerted cultivation (apparent in both DAPSS and PAPSS behaviours) do not appear to associate directly with attainment for the ages 16+. Elaborated codes (as identified by Bernstein, 1971) were not specifically explored in the study but can relate to elements of cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 2010). Cultural capital was loosely measured by asking students to reveal their parents' highest qualifications, but this bore no association with student outcomes, despite some students reporting that their parents/carers had degree level qualifications.

However, the elements of concerted cultivation that relate to intrinsic motivation are widely reported in the qualitative data (expectations, aspirations and values). Elements that foster intrinsic motivation are unlikely to be communicated purely between the ages of 16 and 18

and are likely to have been developed over time – again reiterating the importance of concerted cultivation in the students' early years and not specifically at adolescence. Indeed, the idea of concerted cultivation was developed on American school-aged children (Lareau, 2011) and so cannot reliably be compared to current UK college data. For UK college aged students, the existing research evidence between economic, cultural, social capital and the influence on attainment is somewhat minimal and so these aspects have had to be discussed and contrasted to school-based findings.

As explained within the ideas of economic, cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 2010) high parental achievements (i.e. qualifications) are likely to be associated with high outcomes for students. Specifically, Desforges (2003) at school-level found that the maternal level of education was a strong predictor for parental involvement which drives high attainment. However, of the students surveyed there was *no statistically significant* association present between either father or mother's qualifications (where this information was provided) and student outcomes in the current study, which is reflective of Bourdieu's (2010) claim that although there is a strong link between socio-economic status and academic gains at primary and secondary levels, the correlation is identified to be much weaker at university level. College level was not specifically mentioned by Bourdieu (2010). However, an unexpected finding in the current study was that student *knowledge* of mother's academic achievements *was* seen to associate with higher student outcomes. As discussed in section 5.1, this may relate to close relationships and emotional support offered by mothers, which may in itself be a contributor to intrinsic motivation for students, resulting in higher outcomes. However, the level of parental (either mother or father) qualifications did not associate with student outcomes which suggests that the effect of cultural capital may not be as evident at the FE stage as it may be at the primary school level.

Bourdieu (2010) and Robinson and Harris (2014) looked at parental involvement at age 18+ and found no correlation between socio-economic status and outcomes for university students. Here there is a clear indication that the effect of socio-economic status becomes

less of an influence in Further and Higher Education in relation to attainment, as has been echoed in the findings for this study. One reason for this may be that due to the high level of specific level 3 subject knowledge, as students report that parents/carers are less able to understand and explain concepts. Moreover, although skills like proof reading and information searching are helpful, they can only influence students to a certain extent. These ideas were identified by students in the qualitative data and linked to ownership. Lack of direct specific parental support (as reported by students) is likely to force ownership upon students who perform highly if they have the intrinsic motivation to do well, meaning that, in contrast to Bourdieu (2010), economic, cultural and social capital may have less impact than intrinsic motivation in FE. Reasons for this are proposed below:

1) Students who have chosen to go into FE represent a manifestation of independence in itself and so have indicated their willingness or openness to undertake independent study which means it could be argued that Bourdieu's ideas regarding cultural capital have less impact in the culture of FE in comparison to other educational establishments.
2) Some students studying at level three might have had parents/carers who prepared them to take tests, e.g. GCSEs and might have paid a private tutor to work with them in order for them to do well. However, for those students who have made a decision to enrol on a BTEC FE course, parents/carers are less likely to have the opportunities to be influential in this way.

5.2.3 Ethnicity, course and gender

The current project found no statistically significant difference between outcomes gained by each ethnic group. This may be partly due to there being a small number of minority ethnic students with White British representing the most common ethnicity (i.e. small samples lead to lower confidence and were not large enough to show any associations). However, a study of a much larger scale involving 1,056 students aged 15-17 years by Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2014) also found no significant differences in relation to attainment across ethnicities

when comparing outcomes for European American students and African-American students, although arguably this only represents American students.

Ethnicities in the current study included Black, Asian, Mixed, Chinese, White British and White other. Gutman and Akerman (2008) claimed that black Caribbean students are less likely to gain successful outcomes against other ethnic groups, despite high expectations. Interestingly, for the current project, two of the highest grades (equivalent to 3 A*s) were gained by black Caribbean female students and (specifically) females in this ethnic group gained an average of 320 UCAS points (which equates to grades AAB at A-level). Black male students achieved lower average results and the highly attaining female black students appeared to push the overall average up. It was not possible to reliably compare statistically significant differences in attainment between black males and black females in the study due to an inadequate sample size.

The current project identified that for the 240 students involved, students enrolled on particular courses gained significantly higher average grades than other courses. For the current cohort (grades received in summer 2016), Health and Social Care students outperformed Travel and Tourism students by an average of 141 UCAS points. This finding was also evident across the overall college data where Health and Social Care students outperformed all other courses, on average. Additionally, female students gained statistically significant higher grades than male students by an average of 34 UCAS points (see Table 4.5). Again, this finding was also reflected in the overall college results in the same academic year where females gained higher results than males (see Appendix N). The stark contrast between the average grades gained by each gender is also seen for students enrolled at different further education institutions where it was found that girls consistently outperform boys throughout schooling and up to the age of 18 (DfES, 2007). This has been the case nationwide since the year 2000 where on average females gain higher outcomes than males across levels two and three (Younger, 2014).

In response to a freedom of information request by the researcher, the DfE provided a breakdown of level 3 results for students aged 16-18 by ethnicity, course and gender for the year 2015-2016 in English colleges which is reflective of findings for the current study:

a) Female students outperformed male students
b) Health and Social Care students gained higher average grades than Travel and Tourism (however Performing Arts gained higher average grades than Health and Social care)
c) Black students gained the lowest average grades overall. However, two of the highest performing students were both black females.

This data can be viewed in Appendix N. However, it must be noted that the document does not state or give enough information to conclude whether these differences are statistically significant or not and the outcomes are not based on UCAS points, as in the current study.

However, the discrepancy between grades for gender and course was not seen to be echoed by the qualitative data for a number of reasons. During the qualitative data collection, students were not asked to specifically discuss their personal grades (and indeed at the time of data collection did not know their final grades). The focus of the qualitative data collection was related specifically to reported PIB (although in parts students were asked how their grades might be affected). When qualitative data was explored to identify if there was a link between student perceptions of PIB and grades received at the end of the academic year, there was no association observed between PIB and course: PIB ranged across course, age, gender and ethnicity where the majority of students' PIB reflected the 'Supposed Independence' and 'Clarified Independence' categories. This is not to suggest that the quantitative and qualitative findings did not triangulate - merely that they measured different aspects or had an alternative focus.

5.2.4 Study age, stage, student assertion, independence and motivation

The quantitative data showed that student age did not associate significantly with outcomes. Indeed, the LoID confirmed that the difference in age between 16-24 had no obvious bearing on PIB and attainment. Age crossed all MoSE in the LoID. The qualitative data in particular highlighted that students attempt to assert themselves in relation to independent choices regarding their studies as they perceive college to be a place of independence and a stage of autonomy (e.g. see Figure 4.2). Indeed, Hornby and Witte (2010) report that parental influence programmes became less effective as student age increased. Consequently, the idea of the 'stage' of education was identified as more important than specific *ages* in relation to attainment. The qualitative findings identified that many students had to go through a process of assertion on entering college where they expressed clear opinions and expectations for their parental/carer involvement (particularly if parents/carers had not initiated an expectation for student independence and ownership). Some participants reported that where parents/carers appeared to be unresponsive or non-respectful to this assertion, students were more likely to want to behave in a rebellious way and challenge the control of authority. This echoes the findings by Baumrind (1966) who stated that supervision that was too overpowering was likely to lead to rebelliousness in adolescence. This parental/carer control of authority was categorised in the 'Authoritised PEAV' and the 'Authoritised NE-PAV' models in the LoID. Abrahamson, Baker & Caspi (2002), Barkley, Robin and Benton (2014) and Windell (2012) also discussed adolescents' defiance against authority, matching some of the experiences expressed in this study. However, as identified in the MoSE, a minority of students appeared to respect their parents' controlling approach (Authoritised PEAV) and subsequently had high attainment and did not follow the path of rebellion as described by other students. This may be down to the differences in individual relationships between children and their parents/carers and may also be reflective of parental experiences of education and possibly cultural expectations, although this aspect was difficult to conclude with any certainty.

Independence, ownership for learning and assertion were identified as ‘intrinsic factors’ in the ‘RD’ diagram as reported in the qualitative data. Student assertion was measured in the quantitative data through the questionnaire (question 13) representing RQ2. However, there was no significant difference found between students who differed in their opinions regarding whether they perceived themselves to be able to control the type and amount of parental/carer involvement they received. This is an interesting finding where 13.3 percent of respondents said they feel that they do not often/never feel in control of their PIB. This group of students is represented in the LoID as the two ‘Authoritised’ MoSE. The qualitative data clearly signifies that students seek independence and ownership for learning. However, when it comes to results, it appears that outcomes are not significantly associated with either tight parental/carer control or lack of parental/carer control. This may be because most parents/carers (i.e. in the ‘Supposed Independence’ and ‘Clarified Independence’ models) are reported to respect their child’s independence at age 16+ and yet these students gain a mix of grades. This also may reflect the holistic nature of parental involvement, where individual behaviours do not link directly to outcomes and suggests that there are other factors present, including the influence of intrinsic motivation for students over 16. This is important to note, since it reflects findings by Froiland, Mayor and Herlevi (2015) and in relation to intrinsic motivation, which was seen to associate with higher attainment and was said to have more impact than parenting behaviours. The benefits of high levels of intrinsic motivation on outcomes was also evident in work by Fan, Williams and Wolters (2012) and Ryan and Deci (2000). Indeed, Suissa (2013) highlights the need for internal motivation rather than external motivation, arguing that students can crave and depend on praise for their motivation. ‘Praise Junkies’ (Suissa, 2013, p1) as she calls them, have a brain which has developed a chemical need for a constant reward. Rewards were mentioned by only two students and students were not directly asked about this. It is unclear whether this factor was associated with attainment for the current study.

The elements that underpin student assertion can be seen in the inner layer of the EoM diagram where students' pride in their achievement links to responsibility and ownership for learning. Student aspirations also feed into motivation which is influenced by freedom and choices associated with study in FE. In the IASO diagram, student assertion is seen to feed into independence along with trust, respect and age/stage related expectations. It seems, therefore that students view college as an institution where they are expected to have the freedom to make their own decisions and so attracts students who have a high value and willingness for independence. In other words, the student population at college may be very different from adolescents in other educational settings (e.g. a school sixth form) and so highlights the importance of investigating and understanding the exclusive FE context, as was completed in the current study.

Independence was found to be coupled with autonomy and 'academic functioning' as described by Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack (2007) but the ability to function academically was likely to be based upon prior parental behaviours (i.e. concerted cultivation) which links to high values and respect for student ownership. Likewise, Robinson and Harris (2014) noted that students who appeared to do well had parents/carers who communicated high expectations and then stepped back to provide independent learning experiences for their children. Although independence in itself was not seen specifically to associate with high attainment, it was sought after by the majority of students, where a mix of grades was evident. In contrast to the current study, independence has been noted in Baumrind's (2013) style 'Authoritative' parenting which shows parental encouragement for student autonomy (Baumrind, 2013 and Maccoby and Martin 1983) and has been found to have links with higher attainment (Huang and Gove, 2015). As with high expectations, the allowance of independence and encouragement of autonomy is likely to be based upon parental perceptions of their child's abilities and competencies. However, the association is likely to be more complex and is based upon previous experiences and relationships rather than a seemingly simple correlation between independence and outcomes.

Independence of students is also likely to be encouraged by parents/carers due to the level of study and the lack of parental competence in particular areas, as has been highlighted by students in the qualitative data. Lloyd-Smith and Baron (2010) also discussed the difficulties associated with the involvement of parents/carers at higher academic levels which included parents/carers feeling unable to help with specific subjects due to lack of knowledge, resulting in decreased parental confidence and subsequently reduced support. This idea was agreed by Coleman (2009) who claimed that parental withdrawal in later school years may be attributed to a higher-level school curriculum which some parents/carers are likely to find daunting and therefore choose to become less involved. However, often parents/carers were reported to offer emotional support, despite not feeling comfortable or able to offer practical support as was found in the current project. Lack of parental knowledge may shift the focus on to the lecturers rather than parents/carers, as at this stage of study, lecturers are likely to be more knowledgeable and more able to help than parents/carers.

Primary aged children would most likely to be helped by any adult who was more able than them across a variety of subjects. However, the parents may no longer be more able than their child studying in an FE environment due to the complex/specialist nature of the courses at level 3, as has been noted in the qualitative data. Teachers or peers are likely to have more knowledge than parents/carers and are better equipped to support, making parental involvement more difficult. Shulman (1986) supports this view, describing ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ (p.9) where teachers are the optimum source of learning because they not only have the knowledge of the specialist subject but are also armed with the best ways to facilitate student learning for specific curriculum areas, which further reduces the support that parents/carers can provide for college aged adolescents (as opposed to school-aged students). Therefore, the most effective scaffolding practices for learning found in the current study (initially identified by Bruner, 1966) are likely to be provided by lecturers at college, rather than parents/carers.

Responsive parents/carers are more likely to understand their children's needs and provide the safety net which is identified in the LoID for the 'Supposed Independence', 'Authoritised PEAV' and 'Authoritised Ne-PAV' in order to give emotional support. In the current study it was difficult to determine whether this aspect had any particular bearing on outcomes, since a mix of MoSE included the safety net and a mix of grades were evident across these. However, despite a lack of association between emotional support and attainment overall, it may have had many benefits for student well-being which was not directly measured in the current study. Keeping in mind that the current study focuses solely on adolescents/young adults, independence may also be supported by parents/carers due to the emotional climates that are presented during the stages of adolescence. Erikson (1995) discussed the 'psychosocial crisis' stage where adolescents are likely to need independence to give them the opportunity to determine their identity which is reflected as a positively received parental behaviour in the current study.

Independence, responsibility and ownership are seen to have associations with student motivation in the current study. Student motivation through extrinsic and intrinsic sources was seen to be influential and underpinned all of the nodes created in response to student perceptions. However, intrinsic motivation was not actually measured by the current study in the quantitative data. The BTEC courses are designed to be cumulative (i.e. a minimum submission of assignments results in pass grades but an attempt to fulfil higher criteria through extra work is likely to gain higher grades). This links to the growth mind-set theory devised by Dweck (2006) in that perseverance and growth in learning will reap reward over the two-year programme and can be associated with intrinsic student motivation. This motivation is again likely to be developed in children at a young age through the communication of expectations, aspirations and values over a lifetime (concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2011)) and is unlikely to be affected by one-off parental conversations during the 16+ age period.

5.2.5 Parental pressure and lack of choices/trust

Students were asked about parental pressure through the following DAPSS statement: 4e: “I sometimes feel pressurised by my parents/carers to do college work when I don’t really want to”. 71 percent of students either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement and these students had higher average outcomes than those who agreed. Even though students in the ‘Authoritised PEAV’ model in the LoID would agree with this and still gained high outcomes, the other group who recognised pressure (Authoritised NE-PAV) gained lower grades, which pulls the average outcomes down for students who identified pressure in their PIB. The ‘Authoritised NE-PAV’ group report parents/carers to have low expectations for them (possibly based on students’ poor previous performance in education) but become involved because they value education and believe that they can drive the student to achieve through pressurised approaches which does not necessarily change students’ intrinsic motivation and is a form of extrinsic motivation.

Robinson and Harris (2014) found that more parental involvement with adolescent students was associated with lower results. Specifically, Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman (2013) found that homework help at the age of fifteen was associated with lower grades. Likewise, student motivation and academic achievement in adolescents was found by Coleman (2009) to decrease if the amount of parental involvement increased during these years. As has been argued previously, this may reflect a parental response to previous experiences of education. Possibly, if students have received poor grades then parents/carers are likely to become involved (or stay involved) because they feel they need to push their children to do well, fearing they do not have the skills or competence to achieve independently. This suggests that parental support in itself may not be directly influencing outcomes since this behaviour is reflected in the ‘Authoritised NE-PAV’ where grades are lower. However, for some students, high levels of unwanted parental involvement may also link to student assertion and rebellious behaviour as previously mentioned and highlights the necessary requirement for most students to feel a sense of ownership in their studies, as

has been reflected in the majority of student perceptions in this study and is represented across the two main models: ‘Clarified Independence’ and ‘Supposed Independence’.

The idea of parental pressure can be mapped on to the MoSE in the LoID and can be seen across more than one MoSE. Both the ‘Authoritised’ categories involve pressurised support. However, this study found that parents/carers who have high values, aspirations and expectations which are coupled with a sense of pressure, a minority of students do tend to attain higher grades. It is those students who receive high values and aspirations but low expectations that perform poorly. In other words, parents/carers who reportedly do not expect their children to perform highly (despite having high values and aspirations) associates with lower grades and as with previous influences, this is likely to relate to past student performance. If a student has performed particularly poorly, this group of ‘Authoritised NE-PAV’ parents/carers are more likely to assume the responsibility and so display pressurised approaches. Therefore, the act of pressure in itself may not specifically result in poorer grades, but the reasons behind that pressure relate to previous poor performance and low parental expectations which is why a link between low grades and pressurised approaches is seen. Pressurised parental behaviour links with authoritarian filial piety (Chen and Ho, 2012) which is characterised by rigid parental requirements, parental seniority, and a strong sense of ‘compliance’ where children feel obliged and pressurised to supress their self-autonomy. Chen and Ho (2012) found that the Authoritarian approach failed to encourage students to internalise their parents’ positive values for education and therefore did not contribute to academic achievement. They affirmed that this approach actually facilitates “pressures which undermine student success” (Chen and Ho, 2012, p322). Baumrind (2013) also discussed an ‘Authoritarian’ parenting style which was linked to psychological control and forceful/demanding behaviours. Unfortunately, it was difficult to determine if students had or had not internalised their parents’/carers’ values for education, since most students reported in the quantitative data that both their parents/carers and themselves valued their education.

Other reasons have also been offered as to why high-pressure results in lower outcomes. Murayama et al, (2015) suggested that too much pressure resulted in children experiencing anxiety along with frustration which also linked with low confidence i.e. if parents/carers have low expectations but high (forced) aspirations then the student experiences stress due to unrealistically forced hopes. This may also be seen to adversely affect student motivation because if a student feels that parental aspirations are unobtainable then they will be limited by a 'fixed mindset' (Dweck, 2006) which links to lower levels of determination. Similarly, Deci and Ryan (1985) deem that intrinsic motivation (i.e. an internal drive to succeed in education) is actually reduced by parents/carers increasing external control over their children, as has been reflected in the current project where students report rebellion against pressurised approaches. Home supervision was seen to yield the weakest educational gain for students (Fan and Chen (2001) and Bagby and Sulak, (2015) which links to distrust (possibly again based on previous poor student performance). Distrust can also be seen to result in intrusive behaviours which have also been found to have links with low outcomes (Trautwein et al, 2006).However, both the 'Authoritised' MoSE in the LoID are linked to high levels of surveillance, (which suggests a lack of parental trust) but 'Authoritised PEAV' is linked with high outcomes and 'Authoritised NE-PAV' is linked with lower outcomes, suggesting that this association is more complex and possibly influenced by other factors such as family values, history or culture.

DAPSS includes both the idea of pressure and lack of student ownership (through parents/carers making choices for students). Although pressure was generally seen to associate with low outcomes for a number of reasons, the idea of student ownership is more complex. A minority of students (2.6 percent) who strongly agreed with the statement "my parents/carers make choices about my work" gained significantly higher than average outcomes against those who agreed or disagreed (i.e. where the feeling about this statement was strongly in agreement, students gained most highly). This is reflective of those students in the 'Authoritised PEAV' model where parents/carers try to own or direct the students' work

and accounts for approximately 6 percent of the students in the LoID derived from responses for the qualitative data. This group includes students who were White, Asian and Black. Similarly, in the quantitative data, 3 percent of students disagreed that their choices were respected by their parents/carers and yet they outperformed students who agreed with this statement. Again, this is likely to reflect those students in the 'Authoritised PEAV' MoSE (gathered from qualitative data) where parents/carers are reported to take the lead and assume ownership/direction for students' learning, but combined with high expectations, aspirations and values for education, these behaviours are associated with high outcomes.

Skinner (1948) and Bandura (1976) highlighted the influence of rewards and changing/ shaping behaviour. Parents/carers offering rewards was rarely mentioned in the qualitative data, but where it was identified, it was coupled with high aspirations and values for education as well as DAPSS behaviours and was seen to associate with high outcomes. Bagby and Sulak 2015 said that providing external rewards for high attainment or withdrawing items for poor performance can negatively affect outcomes. As rewards were only mentioned by a couple of students, no clear conclusions can be made in regard to this.

For students who reported to have parents who become involved despite being uninvited there appear to be no associations with outcomes. Additionally, there was no significant difference between grades for students who reported their ability to control either the amount or type of parental involvement. This may be due to these behaviours appearing in two models of student experience: 'Authoritised PEAV' (which is associated with high outcomes) and 'Authoritised NE-PAV' (which is associated with low outcomes) and therefore an overall association with attainment is not apparent.

5.2.6 Uninvolved parents/carers

The perception that some parents/carers were completely uninvolved was seen across the 'Dismissed', 'Headstrong' and in some cases and 'Clarified Independence' MoSE. However, even if parents/carers were not reported to engage educationally with students, most

parents/carers were likely to provide accommodation, food and financial support to students in some way. When critiquing Baumrind's (1967) work on parenting styles, Maccoby and Martin (1983) introduced an additional category called the 'uninvolved' parent. Maccoby and Martin (1983) asserted that although parents in this category try to cater for a child's basic needs (e.g. food, accommodation), they do little to interact or communicate effectively with their children and often ignore or neglect them. There is an important distinction here between the literature and the findings for this study. Some students in the 'Clarified Independence' model reported their parents to be uninvolved with their education, but they reported parents/carers to support them emotionally with non-educational needs and so are not reported to be neglectful. However, students in the 'Dismissed' and 'Headstrong' categories tended to describe their experiences as neglectful, which teases out the idea that un-involvement is reported in a number of ways by FE students. Some students have highlighted experiences which appear neglectful, where un-involvement is reported as an undesirable behaviour by students. However, for some students, a parent/carer who allows for and fosters independence by being un-involved is received positively. This relates back to the idea of parental responsiveness to students' needs, specifically in the context of FE and the range of experiences that students report, as can be seen in the LoID (Figure 4.7). Work by Maccoby and Martin (1983) in relation to uninvolved parenting is drawn on in more than one section since it appears to be weaved throughout the findings for a minority of students. It is not surprising that Baumrind (1967) did not initially identify this category because her original research was based on observing exchanges between parents/carers and children in the home and it is unlikely that when being observed, parents/carers would completely ignore their children whereas the current study has highlighted the concept of 'neglect' for a minority group, based on student perceptions which could be argued to be more reflective of real experiences than findings gathered by an observer which may inhibit, supress or encourage particular behaviours.

The uninvolved parenting style in the current study is reflected mainly in two slightly different ways in the MoSE. Students in the 'Dismissed' and 'Headstrong' MoSE reported having parents/carers who paid little attention to them, but they differ in their ability to attain highly through differences in their intrinsic motivation. 'Headstrong' students were found to have a stronger sense of intrinsic motivation than students in the 'Dismissed' MoSE. However, students in both categories reported valuing the support provided by college lecturers. Indeed, lecturers and tutors who have high expectations for students in these categories may be able to influence their motivation to high higher outcomes since expectations were seen to be more influential if the supportive individual is not aware of the students' previous performance (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). However, this aspect has not been specifically measured in the current study.

5.2.7 Perceptions of PIB and influence on grades

There was no statistically significant difference in grades gained by students who either strongly agreed or strongly disagreed that PIB would result in higher student outcomes. This was also reflected in the interview findings where although different experiences are reported, there does not appear to be an optimum model for PIB and its association with attainment, echoing the finding that other factors and influences may be more important for attainment than PIB in itself. Students who report to want more PIB are those who believe that parental involvement will directly influence higher grades, so this is not a surprising finding. Interestingly, these students reported high levels of parental aspirations and expectations, which links to the reported benefits of academic socialisation throughout a child's life, as noted by Lam and Ducreux (2013) and Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013).

As no other studies have asked students in UK colleges directly about their view on whether reported PIB has direct associations with their grades, there is no literature that can be compared/contrasted here.

5.3 PIB across age, ethnic group, gender and course (RQ3)

Quantitative data found that student responses in relation to experience of PIB were not found to differ significantly across age, ethnic group, gender or course which fulfils research aim three. Indeed, this is also reflected in the qualitative data where course, gender, ethnicity and age do not appear to associate with particular responses in relation to reported PIB and do not show links with any particular models of student experience in the LoID. This has been shown specifically in the diagram with the arrow which denotes that these factors may affect parental behaviours but that this is seen across all models.

There are a few individual examples where ethnicity and culture have been specifically noted by students in relation to their experiences, but these findings are related to a few select participants and do not show consistency with the experience of others who share the same ethnicity. In other words, parental involvement behaviours are multi-faceted and cross all models of student experience and do not appear to be related or associated to factors such as ethnicity.

Although the mention of age is usually coupled with parental or student expectation, the actual age of students in college does not seem to affect this general perception where the majority of students enrolled at college see themselves as independent individuals who feel a sense of ownership over their work and use their age as a means to justify this perception, regardless of their actual age because they are either adults or on the cusp of adulthood. Indeed, as has been noted throughout the project, parenting styles do appear to change as individuals grow older, but once enrolled at college, age does not seem to have associations with particular parenting behaviours.

These findings are in contrast to much of the work completed on parenting styles. As can be viewed in Chapter Two, the following studies found that different ethnic groups differed in their parental involvement styles. Hill and Wang, 2015 compared African-Americans to European Americans, Kremer-Sadlik and Fatigante, 2015 compared American and Italian

parents, Fan, Williams and Wolters, 2012 compared Caucasian, African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic, Barn, Ladino and Rogers, 2006 compared Black and Asian and Ceballo et al, (2014) looked specifically at Latino parenting behaviours. Reasons for the differences between these findings and the current study may be related to the geographical location in which the research was completed. All of the studies above (except Barn, Ladino and Rogers, 2006) were completed outside of the UK where the culture and society is likely to influence parenting practices in different ways and this may be the main reason for the difference in findings for the current study completed in the UK. Additionally, the study by Barn, Ladino and Rogers (2006), although completed in the UK, only found a slight difference in the values for education where Black or Asian parents reported to have high values for education because they viewed education as a way of combatting racial discrimination. Values for education were generally seen to be high across all ethnicities in the current study, with only a very small proportion reporting to have parents with confused or low values. Importantly, this study gathered views of the parents, which is one reason for the difference in findings between this and the current study which gathered *student* perceptions. Similarly, the current study focused on students over the age of 16, whereas these studies looked primarily at parenting practices for school-aged children which could be another reason for the difference in findings.

Students reported that the amount of parental involvement decreased during the school years and at college level, a finding supported by Lloyd-Smith and Baron (2012) and Coleman (2009). They found that parental involvement significantly reduces at a higher level of study due to the specialist nature of the subjects, as was found for the current study. However, there was no difference in parenting styles between students who were enrolled on different course programmes. Literature for gender found that boys are likely to react positively to warmth and discipline but girls react negatively to either too much warmth or too much discipline (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). However, the current study did not necessarily measure ‘warmth’ per se but rather gathered perceptions on more concrete behaviours.

Additionally, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) research was based on younger children where discipline was seen as a necessary part of child rearing. However, in the current study, discipline was rarely acknowledged and autonomy and independence were prominent at age 16+.

5.4 Exploration of parenting styles and attainment (RQ4)

Research aim four sought to understand whether reported PIB could be segregated into groups to form different styles of parenting for FE students and if so, whether those groups had any association with attainment. This section opens by investigating the visual diagrams created in response to RQ4 which were created in response to the qualitative findings. Then the initial categories of DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV will be challenged and links made to existing literature. The CFA results are then deciphered. This section explores both why statements might be seen to group together but also gives reasons as to why some statements appear in more than one factor. The LoID is then explored in relation to existing literature. Finally, the main quantitative model (CFA) is compared, contrasted and 'mapped on' (where appropriate) to the main qualitative model (LoID) with reasons suggested for disagreement in data sets.

Data in relation to groupings of behaviour were gathered firstly through the focus group statement choosing activity. Although this has given an important insight into the proportions of participants choosing mainly PAPSS and PEAV behaviours and allowed students a chance to explain their choices, this grouping data has been disregarded since it was only seen to reflect a small proportion of participants (24) as opposed to the groupings identified by the CFA which were based on responses from 240 participants. Additionally, the focus group data did not reflect a scale of agreement for behaviour and was limited by the dichotomous nature (i.e. chosen or not chosen). Therefore, this section focuses on the CFA (quantitative data: Table 4.12), the visual diagrams RD (Figure 4.4), EoM (Figure 4.5) and IASO (Figure 4.6) and the LoID (Figure 4.7) (qualitative data) as these were seen to be most representative of overall student perceptions.

5.4.1 Visual diagrams: RD, EoM and IASO

The diagrams referred to in this section were created in response to the themes identified in the qualitative analysis. It is important to note that these diagrams are not intended to represent every student experience and are a pre-cursor to the LoID. However, they represent a culmination of student perceptions. Below, each diagram is analysed with existing literature and, later in the chapter, is discussed against quantitative data.

5.4.1.1 The Related Domains (RD) diagram (Figure 4.4)

The RD diagram shows three groups of factors that appear to influence attainment as perceived by students. Related Factor 1 encompasses intrinsic motivation and Factors 2 (internal family factors) and Factor 3 (external factors) encompass elements of extrinsic motivation. Each factor is seen to be associated in some way as it demonstrates all the holistic influences for the student. In this way, it is reflective of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1989) which shows how different systems can influence an individual. However, there are some important differences between the models. Firstly, the RD diagram looks at what students are saying about parental involvement and its influence on attainment, whereas the Ecological Systems theory focuses on factors that can influence an individual's behaviour for which there is a subtle difference. The first system in the Ecological Systems theory is the Microsystem which includes the influences of family, peers and teachers. Importantly, an individual is not just viewed to be a recipient of the microsystem environment but also as a contributor. This is particularly true in relation to the current study where although parents/carers are seen to be responsive to student needs, often students appear to be responsive to parent needs or behaviours, such as the students who experience 'Authoritised PEAV' and feel a sense of reciprocity and appreciation for their involvement. Additionally, student assertion means that students are able to shape, mould and contribute to the agreements made with their parents/carers. The second layer (Mesosystem) describes how the microsystems can relate to each other. As an example, a neglected child would be seen to be less likely to develop positive attitudes towards teachers

due to the previous experiences they have had. However, this view challenges student responses in the current study, since those who were found to experience 'uninvolved' parents/carers rely on and appreciate the support teachers give to enable them to pass their course.

In the current study, elements that relate to parental work commitments are seen to have a direct impact on the student. Where some students feel that parental involvement has direct links to attainment, students feel frustrated if parents/carers are not able to offer their support due to tiredness or stress and so are seen to have a direct impact on the student. This is noted in the RD diagram under factor 2: Internal Family Factors. Here it indicates that an influencing factor might be 'available time to help/parental tiredness or stress'. Parental stress or tiredness may also result in 'emotional PIB' and 'practical PIB' being hindered (which is also featured within factor 2 – see Figure 4.4). This relates to the third layer in Bronfenbrenner's (1989) Ecological Systems theory (the Exosystem) which is concerned with how elements in the microsystem may indirectly affect the student i.e. a parent working long hours may suffer from increased stress which may affect the student indirectly. The RD Diagram highlights that, although there are a range of internal family factors, these can be used in different ways by parents/carers, depending on the parent-student relationship and underlying expectations. As an example, students reported a distinction between practical and emotional PIB, which may be affected by parental lack of competence in specialised level 3 subjects. Economic and social capital are also viewed in this category because they are seen to be directly affecting the individual (particularly when linked to Lareau's (2011) idea of concerted cultivation for middle class parents/carers). However, Bronfenbrenner (1979) places socioeconomic status in the outer-lying system called the Macrosystem. This suggests it may be further removed from the individual and not directly affect them. As is seen in the current study, for students in FE, socio-economic capital is not seen as being influential on specific outcomes for students. Indeed, the links between socio-economic

status and attainment become weaker as the student progresses through the education system (Robinson and Harris, 2014 and Bourdieu (2010).

One criticism of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model is that it does not obviously account for the active role of the student in determining their outcomes (except that reciprocity in the microsystem was briefly acknowledged). However, the Related Factor 1 in the RD diagram points to intrinsic factors which link to intrinsic motivation. At this level of study, intrinsic motivation is seen to be important and, although elements of extrinsic motivation (i.e. emotional and practical support) are seen as important in respect to student social and emotional need, they are less likely to obviously contribute directly to grades. It is more likely that elements of concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2011) and the academic trajectory (Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried, 2013) are influential in determining and shaping intrinsic motivation in the student's earlier years.

5.4.1.2 The Elements of Motivation (EoM) diagram (Figure 4.5)

The EoM (shown in Figure 4.5) sets an inner layer and an outer layer of student influences and so can be seen to represent elements of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with student motivation seen as a central factor. The arrows show that extrinsic factors can be seen to have a bearing on intrinsic factors. This idea has also been identified by Fan, Williams and Wolters (2012) who found that parenting style was able to foster intrinsic motivation in students and was more likely to create students who achieved high outcomes than students who relied on extrinsic forms of motivation alone. This may be particularly true for parental aspirations, role modelling and expectations, as identified by Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) and are likely to have been instigated in a child's younger years in the academic trajectory.

Student pride, aspirations, choices, responsibility and want of ownership for learning in the inner layer of the diagram are represented for the majority of students in the current study and all tie into Erikson's (1995) idea that adolescents are in a process of searching for their

identity and are asserting themselves as they are in the 'identity versus role confusion' stage. This also links to responsiveness as parents/carers who are respectful and understanding of this stage of adolescence allow their children responsibility to make study choices, as was identified by Dumont et al (2014). Responsiveness too, is represented on the diagram and is seen to underpin emotional support (safety net). Although responsiveness was not seen to relate specifically to high attainment, it is viewed as an emotional and social need for many students. The diagram also shows that emotional support is likely to be offered through parental interest by asking questions or gaining advice. This is important to consider in the context of FE because in (for example) the primary school curriculum, the parent is going to be more able than the child and therefore able to support them academically. However, as demonstrated by the current study findings, the parent/carer is not likely to have more knowledge or be more able than the student at level 3 and so conversation is likely to become a form of emotional support, rather than a scaffold for learning specifically.

The diagram also has additional aspects in the outer layer: economic capital and food, clothes, shelter or resources. At first glance, one may assume that food, shelter, clothes and resources are linked to economic capital and so an arrow should be shown between the two. However, for some students, parents/carers may have economic capital, but their children may live separately. Students may have part-time employment to buy themselves these basics and may see themselves as completely independent. Nevertheless, food, clothes, shelter and resources are seen as a basic need for students. This and many of the other aspects in the Elements of Motivation Diagram can be seen to link to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). Basic needs are required first, followed by safety needs. This ties in with student perceptions of a 'safety net' that is provided by parents/carers. Students then build on basic needs by requiring psychological needs such as a sense of belongingness (identified by emotional support and parental interest) and self-esteem. Accomplishments relate to self-esteem and are evident in the inner layer where students desire to feel a sense

of pride in their work. The main difference between the Hierarchy of Needs and the Elements of Motivation diagram is the structure in which the elements are presented. The Elements of Motivation diagram only segregates them between an outer layer and an inner layer and recognises that all may be important at different times for different students. Certainly, those students who are 'Dismissed' may not feel a sense of belonging and this may have an influence on their poorer outcomes. However, the influences identified in the 'Elements of Motivation' diagram are widely viewed by students who have positive parental involvement experiences. These elements may not directly influence high outcomes but are likely to support students' social and emotional needs. Identifying different elements of motivation in this diagram can also be linked to Bronfenbrenner's (1989) Ecological Systems theory where different level systems can impact on an individual's development. As an example, parental expectations and aspirations in the Elements of Motivation diagram can be affected by broader social and cultural values, highlighted by the Macro-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

5.4.1.3 The influences for Independence/Autonomy in Student Ownership (IASO) Figure 4.6

Figure 4.6 is designed to offer the different influences for student independence and is not seen to be reflective of all student experiences. Indeed, some of the elements are starkly different from one another. Some students (although a minority) reported experiencing no interest/absent care which (as discussed previously) reflects Maccoby and Martin's (1983) 'Uninvolved' classification of parenting styles where parents/carers ignore or neglect their children. These students are able to attain highly if they have intrinsic motivation. However, most students who reported having no interest paid to them gained lower outcomes and primarily reported to rely on lecturers and tutors at college to support them in passing their qualification. Some students find themselves working independently as they recognise that their parents/carers are unable to help them due to the specialist subject knowledge at level three. This idea was supported by Coleman (2009) and Lloyd-Smith and Baron (2010) who

said that parents/carers are often daunted by level three content and so are likely to withdraw their help, becoming less involved.

The diagram also shows that student independence is associated with age and stage related expectations where both parents/carers and students expect autonomy in learning in FE. The idea of psychological autonomy relates to Baumrind's (1971) "permissive" parenting style which has been found to relate to lower achievement for young children. However, at FE level, encouragement in decision making is reflective of respect for student choices, and, even if it does not associate with outcomes specifically, it is seen by a majority of students and is viewed as a social and emotional requirement for student satisfaction, which challenges Baumrind's idea that the permissive parenting style is not as effective as the authoritative style.

Student independence is also seen to be affected by student assertion and where a mismatch is found between student expectations and parental involvement, a conversation is usually had regarding the optimum level or type of parental involvement, as perceived by the student. Parental responsiveness is important here (Baumrind, 2013) but the act of setting boundaries and asserting autonomy links with the idea that students in the age of adolescence are likely to be in the process of finding a sense of self where parents/carers should be respectful of children's needs (Erikson, 1995).

Independence is also seen to have links with parental trust and respect for student capabilities. As has been noted, parental trust, high expectations and respect for autonomy is not seen in itself to affect student outcomes, since these behaviours are likely to be often displayed as a reaction to the child's previous academic success. This echoes findings by Gronlnich et al (2002) and Dumont et al (2014) who found that parental responsiveness can be a reaction to their knowledge of student capabilities.

5.4.2 A Challenge for DAPSS, PAPSS, PEAV and NEAV

The Cronbach alpha test for internal consistency found that PIB statements did indeed appear to associate with each other to appear as four groups which clarified the earlier predictions about the nature of behaviours within the DAPSS, PAPSS, PEAV and NEAV. In hindsight, a category for 'no involvement' or a way of measuring 'absent interest' would have been useful in the current study, because these students would mostly be answering 'neither agree nor disagree' and so could easily have got lost or been ignored in the data. Fortunately, the qualitative findings were able to highlight this small group of students. These initial groupings can be seen to map on to ideas by Schaefer (1959) who claimed that children can experience psychological autonomy (PAPSS) or psychological control (DAPSS). He also talked about firm behaviour control (characterised by DAPSS). Parental warmth and care were mentioned by Skinner, Johnstone and Synder (2005) which is echoed in the PAPSS behaviours. Expectations, aspirations and values were seen to be reflective of the idea of 'academic socialisation' developed by Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) which links to PEAV.

However, the internal consistency of these groups was stronger when the groups were combined i.e. elements of gentle encouragement, guidance, discussion, respect, trust and choices in relation to work are linked to high expectations, aspirations and values whereas control, pressure, disrespect for student knowledge and choices and lack of trust are linked to low expectations and aspirations. This finding is echoed in the work by Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack (2007) Knollmann and Wild (2007) and Katz, Kapian and Buzukashvily (2011) who found that parental respect for autonomy, emotional support and communicating positive beliefs about the child (PAPSS and PEAV) were seen to relate to each other and collectively were found to contribute to achievement. Whereas control, intrusive parenting styles (DAPSS) with ideas about children communicated negatively (NEAV) were associated with lower outcomes (Trautwein et al, 2006). One of the most important things to firstly note is that in this thesis PAPSS (and PEAV) is represented by a

majority of students and that DAPSS (NEAV) is represented by a minority. This is an important finding and can be seen in the LoID.

As categories, PAPSS and PEAV combined underpin the ‘Supposed Independence’ and ‘Clarified Independence’ MoSE. However, not all the behaviours that make up PAPSS and PEAV are reflected. The qualitative data has allowed for a further detailed analysis to identify particular behaviours that feature in each model. As an example, ‘gentle encouragement’ does not feature in the ‘Clarified Independence’ model but ‘I choose when and how to work’ does. In other words, the quantitative data gathered through the Cronbach Alpha test has found likely links between PIB statements, but the findings for PIB are more nuanced, as will be discussed for the quantitative data through using CFA procedures (see below).

Similarly, the qualitative data identified that for students who report DAPSS practices, high values were also evident. However, this was difficult to unpick in the quantitative data using the Cronbach Alpha test where individual parental behaviours were grouped together. Qualitative data also saw students with DAPSS being split into a further two categories that the quantitative data did not recognise by using the Cronbach Alpha test. The two categories were ‘Authoritised PEAV’ (not reflective of the quantitative findings for RQ4) and ‘Authoritised NE-PAV’ (which is partly reflective of the quantitative findings for RQ4). This demonstrates a strength of using mixed methods research as has been used in the current project.

5.4.3 Categorical factor analysis and associations with attainment

The CFA found four factors identified from the Likert scale data in relation to agreement or disagreement with different types of parental behaviour. Table 5.1 on the following page shows the links between these factors and the initial DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV. RQ4(b) found that factors 1 and 4 associate with lower attainment (see Table 4.13) in Chapter Four).

Table 5.1: Factor structure analysed against DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEA

Extracted Factors	Items Loaded	Reflective of:
Factor 1: Untrusting interference with pressure and low expectations	4c: "My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have not asked them to"	Some DAPSS and low general expectations for education
	4e: "I sometimes feel pressurised by my parents/carers to do college work when I do not really want to"	
	4f: "My parents/carers do not really trust me to get on with my work myself"	
	4g: "My parents/carers make choices about my work"	
	7b: "My parents/carers are unsure whether I will succeed in education"	
Factor 2: Emotional and Practical support	5a: "My parents/carers gently encourage me to complete my work for college"	A mix of some DAPSS and some PAPSS
	5b: "If I am struggling, my parents/carers will try to guide me in my college work"	
	5c: "My parents/carers are willing to talk to me about my college work, rather than getting involved with the essay writing"	
	4a: "My parents/carers like to be in control of the amount and/or quality of college work that I do"	
	4b: "I rely on my parents/carers to manage and help me with coursework"	
	4c: "My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have not asked them to"	
Factor 3: Expectations, parental inspiration and values for education	8a: "My parents/carers expect me to do well at college"	Some PEAV
	8c: "My parents/carers have inspired me to work hard so I can get the job that I want"	
	8d: "My parents/carers think it is important to get a good education"	
	8e: "I value a good education"	
Factor 4: Low parental expectations and aspirations	7a: "My parents/carers are not sure how well I will do at college"	Some NEAV
	7b: "My parents/carers are unsure whether I will succeed in education"	
	7c: "My parents/carers do not have particular aspirations for what job I get"	

The first important point of note is that although the factors are largely diverse from each other, there are some statements that are present in more than one factor as is explained below. Factor 1 contains some DAPSS behaviours which are related to pressure, lack of trust and interference and is also coupled with general low expectations. This is an expected finding seeing as DAPSS and NEAV were found to have associations in the Cronbach Alpha test (RQ4). Pressure, lack of trust, low expectations and interference were found to associate with lower outcomes, (Boonk et al, 2018; Dumont et al, 2014; Robinson and Harris, 2014 and Chen and Ho, 2012) as has been identified in the current study.

Factor 2 includes the first three DAPSS behaviours and the first three PAPSS behaviours and this is an unexpected finding, as these behaviours were originally seen to oppose one another. However, the DAPSS behaviours in factor 2 are mostly different than the DAPSS behaviours in factor 1. Factor 2 includes gentle encouragement, guidance and willingness to talk but also links with a parental need to control and manage student work. As can be seen, statement 4c is present in both Factors 1 and 2 and relates to parental interference. However, it appears that this interference may be received differently by students, depending on which other behaviours are displayed. As an example, if a parent likes to control work but is also very encouraging, is able to offer guidance and is always willing to talk (factor 2), then the emotional support is evident and 'interference' may be perceived by students as a positive interest. However, this same behaviour may be perceived as a negative and unwanted intrusion, as is perhaps the case in factor 1 where it is coupled with pressure, lack of trust and low expectations. In other words, the idea of parental interference can be received differently, depending on the other behaviours that are experienced alongside it. Factor 2 is reflective of Baumrind's (2013) Authoritarian style where there are high levels of behavioural control (i.e. management of work), but low on psychological control (i.e. wanting to talk and guide students and give gentle encouragement as emotional support). Duckworth and Sabates (2004) further describe this style as 'warm but firm' meaning that the parent offers emotional support but also has elements of control, as is the

case with factor 2. However, Factor 2 fails to include any reference to expectations, aspirations or values and these elements appear to create a stronger group separately (see factor 3) than being interwoven within the other factors (apart from low general expectations (7b) in factor 1).

Factor 3 displays all but one of the PEAV statements (high expectations for college outcomes, high aspirations and high values) which is reflected in research in relation to parenting styles and attainment (Ceballo et al, 2014; Fan and Chen, 2001; Juang and Silbereisen, 2002; Bagby and Sulak, 2015, Desforges, 2003 and Murayama et al, 2015). The only PEAV statement not included in this factor is 8b: “my parents have always known that I will succeed in education”. This may be due to students experiencing stages in their life when they failed to succeed in parts of their education for different reasons and may link to the idea that college is seen by many students as a new route to qualifications after not coping with or failing their A-levels in school and hence their parents/carers went through a stage when they did not ‘always know’ that success was attainable.

Factor 4 displays most of the NEAV statements apart from the negative values, suggesting that negative parental/carer values did not have a strong enough link to any factors. However, this factor did show that negative expectations and aspirations are linked. This makes sense in that if parents/carers reportedly hold low expectations about their children and their abilities, then they are less likely to aspire for them to follow a particular career path if they do not believe they are able to accomplish it. This links back to the idea of realistic expectations, identified by Murayama et al (2015). Lack of involvement for factor 4 also again relates to Maccoby and Martin’s (1983) idea of the ‘uninvolved’ parent which is reflected in the student reporting low or confused aspirations or expectations.

Statement 7b relates to low expectations for education and appears in two different factors (1 and 4). Interestingly, both these factors associate with lower attainment. Therefore, low expectations is seen to be coupled both with a) parental interference, pressure, low trust,

lack of ownership *and b)* low parental aspirations, creating two separate factors. Low expectations are seen alongside pressurised approaches where parents/carers are keen for their children to do well and want to force them into attaining highly, but actually doubt their child's ability (possibly due to prior experiences of attainment). They also believe that they (the parents) are required to (and have the skills to) engage in college work so that the student will achieve. Parents/carers who have low expectations and aspirations for their children do not generally feel that their involvement will help and are not likely to be able to offer help.

The CFA which sought to answer RQ4 created four factors (groups) of PIB. Factor one and factor four showed significance for an association with lower student outcomes. These findings are reflected in the LoID, since factor 1 reflects the 'Authoritised NE-PAV' model and factor 4 reflects the 'Dismissed' model, both of which had been identified through analysis of the qualitative data to produce the MoSE in the LoID, and show agreement in terms of triangulation between quantitative data and qualitative findings.

5.4.4 The Layers of Influence Diagram (LoID):

This section offers new insight into parental involvement in FE and so is discussed with minimal reference to literature. The LoID offers a structure in which to view the different elements that students report to experience at FE level. These elements were reviewed and were found to split into six models. These six models are based around student experiences. This model is unique in a number of ways. Firstly, when reviewing parental involvement, most researchers investigate from the perspective of the parents/carers rather than the students, but the current model is based purely around student experiences. Secondly, where different parenting style theories have been developed, they have centred on younger children and have largely ignored students aged 16+. The MoSE offers an insight into the perceptions of the students but are not necessarily seen to be 'set' categories. Indeed, individual students may feel that they do not fit into any category fully or possibly fit into more than one, depending on the time of day or the reported mood of the parents/carers. This is

not a criticism of the model, since it has been noted that parental involvement is nuanced and all experiences will have slight differences. It has also been noted that parts of the model can be viewed on a continuum where a student may slide from 'Supposed Independence' to 'Clarified Independence' when their parents/carers believe they have proved themselves competent at college level study. Similarly, for a parent who reportedly displayed 'Authoritised PEAV' at the beginning of the college term, on seeing the intrinsic motivation of the student, they may be likely to slip into the 'Supposed Independence' model. However, the model is seen to be representative of the majority of students involved in the study. Baumrind (1966) argued that when reviewing parenting styles it can sometimes be difficult to identify which variables are at work, and hence the LoID seeks to show how the different elements have been reported by students qualitatively through creating different layers that have been reported to be influential in relation to student experiences.

Two of the 'Authoritised' MoSE have very slight differences but both appear to include low intrinsic motivation. This is reflective of findings by Deci and Ryan (1985) who claim that intrinsic motivation is reduced by external control. The difference between the Authoritised models relates to realistic expectations. Although both include parents/carers who are reported to have low trust that students are motivated to do the work (and so feel that they are needed to push the student to achieve), the 'Authoritised PEAV' model includes communication of high (realistic) expectations which is seen to associate with higher outcomes. Again, it may not be the case that high expectations in themselves 'result' in high outcomes and the association is likely to be more complex and this relates back to the problem of causation, discussed in section 5.2.1 where future parental involvement researchers should ensure their understanding of the differences between associations and correlations when making conclusions regarding research. High expectations appear to be closely linked with previous performance and so if parents/carers know their child has competence to achieve, but thinks they may lack motivation, they reportedly behave in a controlling and intrusive way, yet communicate realistic expectations based on previous high

grades. This kind of response to performance has been noted by Gronlnich et al (2002) and Pomerantz and Eaton (2001).

For the current study, the idea of the influence of parental control was seen to be nuanced at FE level. Dumont et al, (2014) investigated parent control (characterised by pressure, intrusiveness, coercion and dominance), parental responsiveness (support for child's autonomy and interpersonal involvement) and parental structure (organisation of environment, setting a framework that supports a notion of competence). In effect control was deemed to correlate negatively with success and parental responsiveness was linked to high success. However, the current study identified some students who reported that control could be coupled with and not separate from other positive behaviours. Where students had control coupled with other positive behaviours and high expectations ('Authoritised PEAV') they were found to perform highly but where it was coupled with low expectations it was found to associate with poorer outcomes. Responsiveness was identified by a majority of students and was seen across the 'Clarified' and 'Supposed' Independence MoSE. However, at FE level, this did not associate specifically with higher grades, although it did link to student satisfaction and emotional support.

The 'Authoritised PEAV' model has been largely seen to be influential for children in the younger years, where it is argued that more parental involvement is advantageous. Goodall and Montgomery (2013) decipher the link between parental engagement (which includes significant commitment and ownership) and parents/carers who are merely 'involved'. 'Engagement' here is reflective of the 'Authoritised PEAV' where parents/carers attempt to take ownership over their child's learning, whereas parents/carers who are merely 'involved' appear to reflect behaviours in the 'Supposed Independence' model which is perceived to be more appropriate and expected by students at FE level. It is important to identify the shift in student expectation between how parents/carers are reported to be involved between school age and college stage where at 16+ the want of independence and autonomy is high on the students' agenda.

Baumrind (1967) discussed two characteristics of parenting: demandingness and responsiveness. She said that these were able to explain the three styles of parenting that she observed. She said that Authoritarian practices had rigidity, intrusiveness, punishments and psychological control which is seen to be reflective of the Authoritised MoSE (although punishments were not mentioned in the current study). Authoritative related to parents/carers who established guidelines, had high expectations, were responsive, warm and democratic where necessary. There was also an element of behavioural control and sensitivity to needs. This style appears to reflect the 'Supposed Independence' MoSE, except for the element of behavioural control. Behavioural control in the context of FE was only noted in the Authoritised MoSE. A smaller proportion of students experience the permissive style which is relaxed and lenient and favours autonomy and student's choices. In a way it mirrors 'friendship' rather than 'parenting'. The sense of autonomy in this style is reflective of the 'Clarified Independence' MoSE where parents/carers allow their children independence and trust them to make choices in their learning. Interestingly, for younger children, this style relates to lower achievement, but in FE, a variety of attainment is evident across both this and the 'Supposed Independence' models. It appears that parenting styles for the younger years are more likely to reflect 'Authoritised PEAV' and 'Supposed Independence' but at FE, the majority of experiences shift to encompass more autonomy, independence and trust where the majority of student experiences are presented.

It is also important to note here that, like Baumrind (1967) senior staff at the college in this study (see Appendix D) appeared to have an expectation that parents/carers will be either influencing students through elements in the 'Authoritised PEAV' or the 'Supposed Independence' models as opposed to accepting that some students have asserted their independence and are expressing their autonomy, and individual choices at age 16+ (as seen in the Clarified Independence MoSE) for which there is no evidence for lower outcomes. It is felt that the mismatch or conflict between college policy and primary data could be a cause for concern, where many students have asserted their expectations for PIB

and have responsive parents/carers who are respectful of their want of autonomy. Whether or not this relates to attainment, student satisfaction in terms of emotional support is an important factor here.

The current project did not identify PIB as fitting into two bipolar categories or styles (such as DAPSS and PAPSS) and like Skinner, Johnson and Snyder (2005), the current project has found parental behaviours to be more complex than these ideas would suggest. Schaefer (1959) claimed that parental behaviours were bipolar. He asserted that parents could either be accepting or rejecting, have psychological autonomy or psychological control, have firm behaviour control or lax behavioural control. Although the elements in Schaefer's findings are evident in the current study and encompass DAPSS and PAPSS, they do not make reference to wider influences such as expectations, aspirations and values. Indeed, the MoSE have identified that student experiences are made up of many different layers of influence. Moreover, Skinner, Johnson and Snyder's (2005) three models are also not fully reflective of all the influences identified in the MoSE. However, unlike Schaefer's (1959) bipolar behaviours, Skinner, Johnson and Snyder (2005) argue that using multiple dimensions was better suited to explaining parenting styles. Their first model relates to parental warmth and care (which is seen across the main MoSE: 'Supposed' and 'Clarified' Independence). Their second model relates to a clear structure for discipline which mainly relates to the Authoritised MoSE which only represents a minority of students in FE as, by this age, most students and their parents/carers appear to have come to an agreement (or at least an acceptance) of appropriate behaviours, whereas for younger children, parents/carers still feel like they have the ability to perhaps mould or change them. The third model is support for autonomy which is seen again across both 'Clarified Independence' and 'Supposed Independence' models. As with Schaefer's (1959) theory, Skinner, Johnson and Snyder (2005) fail to explain the influence of expectations, aspirations and values and do not consider the idea that these values may be communicated throughout the life of the child and embedded within the academic trajectory (Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried, 2013) from a

young age, meaning that particular behaviours may not directly impact student behaviours and subsequent success, as has been suggested by findings in the current study.

The LoID highlights that in the 'Supposed Independence' category, students are likely to use communication with parents/carers as a form of emotional support and practical support, but these attributes do not specifically relate to academic outcomes, since this category and the 'Clarified' models (which has little parental communication in regard to college work) have a variety of grades. In the MoSE, the parental role in relation to academic support is reported as minimal due to parental inability to offer suitable guidance or advice in relation to specific subject content. For the 'Dismissed' and 'Headstrong' models, parents/carers do not appear willing to support, even if they are able. Indeed, for students across these models the more able other is likely to be someone other than the parent. Students identified that lecturers/tutors and peers can often have more of an influence than parents/carers when it came to specific subject knowledge.

Behaviours that relate to independence, trust, respect, high expectations and the value of education were identified as most popular by students. However, if *most* students are agreeing that they experience these positive behaviours but attain a mix of grades, then an association with these positive behaviours and outcomes is absent. This is also seen across the 'Supposed' and 'Clarified' Independence MoSE where these positive behaviours are apparent, but grades are mixed, indicating that PIB in itself is not associated with good outcomes.

Interestingly, although analysed separately, the MoSE in the LoID were seen to be reflective of the initial statement choosing exercise which took place during the focus group activities at the beginning of the project. Students were given a set of 24 PIB statement cards and asked to pick out the ones they agreed with. The seven *most* common behaviours/perceptions chosen were:

5e: "I choose when and how to do my college work"

5f: “My parents/carers trust me to do college work myself”

5g: “My parents/carers respect my choices when it comes to college work”

8a: “My parents/carers expect me to do well at college”

8b: “My parents/carers have always known that I would succeed in education”

8d: “My parents/carers think it is important to get a good education”

8e: “I value a good education”.

These represent three PAPSS statements and four PEAV statements. These statements were selected (as an average) by 81 percent of participants. This is reflective of the MoSE identified in the LoID where most students report that their parents/carers allow/provide them with independence, autonomy, trust, respect, positive expectation and high values for education which crosses the two models: ‘Supposed Independence’ and ‘Clarified Independence’ and this was identified for approximately 82 percent of participants in the qualitative data, showing agreement between data sets in terms of triangulation. Aspects of these may also relate to the ‘Headstrong’ model.

It is also important to note here that aspects relating to student choice, parental trust and parental respect were more likely to be chosen than encouragement, guidance and parental-child discussions about work which were selected (as an average) by 60 percent of participants in the focus groups. This is also reflected in the models of student experience for ‘Supposed Independence’ and ‘Authoritised PEAV’ and ‘Authoritised NE-PAV’ which altogether accounts for approximately 58 percent of participants. Again, this affirms these findings across quantitative and qualitative research tools and suggests reliability in terms of triangulation of findings. Since no published research into the frequency of parental involvement behaviours in FE colleges can be found, the above findings have not been analysed against existing literature.

The seven *least* chosen statements were:

4a: “My parents/carers like to be in control of the amount and/or quality of college work that I do”

4b: “I rely on my parents/carers to manage and help me with coursework”

4c: “My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have not asked them to”

4e: “I sometimes feel pressurised by my parents/carers to do college work when I do not really want to”

4g: “My parents/carers make choices about my work”

7d: “My parents/carers do not think education is particularly important”

7e: “I do not place great importance on my education”

Statements relating to control, reliance on parents/carers, unwanted involvement, pressure and choices by parents/carers were selected (as an average) by 9.2 percent of students. The qualitative data also reflected this finding where approximately 11 percent of students reported behaviours relating to the DAPSS models of student experience: ‘Authoritised PEAV’ and ‘Authoritised NE-PAV’. Again, we see triangulation with respect to findings to the extent that even the percentages for each model of experience are similar.

The cards used for the choosing activity were written in pairs of contradictory statements. However, in 27 percent of cases, students did not select either statement from the pairs. This is not so surprising, since some students felt they had little or no direct (i.e. active) parental involvement at all. As an example, some students would disagree with (and so not select) statement 4a “my parents/carers like to be in control of the amount and/or quality of work that I do” but may also disagree with (not choose) statement 5a: “my parents/carers gently encourage me to complete my work for college”. For the example above, students in

this position are reflective of the ‘Clarified Independence’, ‘Headstrong’ and ‘Dismissed’ models of student experience, since they have little parental involvement specifically relating to college work. This accentuates the fact that for students to be driven in their work and receive positive outcomes, parents/carers do not necessarily have to be perceived to be involved. In fact, student autonomy, independence and intrinsic motivation are seen within most models of student experience in the LoID.

Additionally, some students chose both contradictory behaviours in a set since their parents/carers may have decided to use both approaches. As with the above example of 4a and 5a, parents/carers may have, at different times, been known to both control their children *and at other times* gently encourage them. Additionally, as has been stated previously, the MoSE are seen to be fluid where students can slide between them, or indeed students may feel that they fit into more than one category.

The contribution of qualitative data has allowed greater insight into the many factors at play for students and their PIB and highlighted the wider elements/influences that may impact students’ experiences. It has affirmed the notion that PIB has an element of fluidity and responsiveness with respect to student needs and has highlighted the continuum that is likely to exist where students can assert themselves in moving from experiencing ‘Authoritised PEAV’ to ‘Supposed Independence’ and possibly on to ‘Clarified Independence’. There is no existing research which has explored this phenomenon in FE colleges.

5.4.5 Comparing the quantitative CFA and the qualitative LoID

This section will consider the factors (groups of reported PIB) identified using SPSS Categorical Factor Analysis (CFA) (quantitative data) and will explore how they ‘map on’ to the MoSE identified in the LoID (qualitative data). Table 5.2 shows the links between the CFA and the MoSE:

Table 5.2: Categorical Factor Analysis and the MoSE

Extracted Factors	MoSE
Factor 1: Untrusting interference with pressure and low expectations	Authoritised NE-PAV
Factor 2: Emotional and Practical support	Supposed Independence (with elements of Authoritised PEAV)
Factor 3: Expectations, parental inspiration and values for education	Clarified/ Supposed Independence
Factor 4: Low parental expectations and aspirations	Dismissed/ Headstrong

The *first factor* is made up behaviours that reflect untrusting interference with pressure and low expectations. DAPSS behaviours are seen in both the 'Authoritised PEAV' and the 'Authoritised NE-PAV' MoSE in the LoID. However, one specific difference between these categories is how students report their parents' expectations. Therefore, Factor 1 in the CFA is reflective of the 'Authoritised NE-PAV' where parents/carers interfere, inject pressure and make choices for their children because they do not trust that they can do well independently. Both models have been associated with lower grades for students and shows agreement in terms of triangulation between quantitative data and qualitative findings.

The *second factor* involves different kinds of parental involvement which includes encouragement, guidance and discussions about work. These behaviours are reflective of the 'Supposed Independence' MoSE. However, it is also seen to include elements of parental control and parental involvement that has not been specifically requested by the student. These behaviours are seen to reflect 'Authoritised PEAV' (where students feel that their parent wants to control their work and couples this with asking questions, guidance and

positive aspirations). It is not so surprising that ‘Supposed Independence’ and ‘Authoritised PEAV’ are closely related, since ‘Authoritised PEAV’, ‘Supposed Independence’ and ‘Clarified Independence’ can be seen to be on a continuum where it is likely that students gradually move from right to left (through the models) throughout their time in FE.

The *third factor* is made up of high expectations, high aspirations and high values. These elements are identified as being related to each other across the two main models of student experience: ‘Supposed Independence’ and ‘Clarified Independence’. This is particularly reflective of the ‘Clarified Independence’ MoSE where parents/carers set clear expectations, aspirations and values and then step back to allow autonomy. This also echoes findings for parental involvement with adolescent students completed by Robinson and Harris (2014).

The *fourth factor* is made up of low expectations and low aspirations. These aspects are also seen together for students reporting the ‘Dismissed’ and ‘Headstrong’ model for whom expectations and trust are not openly communicated which may lead to a negative perception.

As can be seen in Table 5.2, the four extracted factors in the CFA are seen to be mapped on to the models in the LoID. Although there are links between all the MoSE from the LoID and the CFA, they do not show that they are fully reflective of each other. This may be because the CFA only accounted for 62.5 percent of the variation in responses. The development of the LoID is a strength of the project which allowed for a deeper analysis of the data through qualitative responses and highlights the advantages of using a mixed-methods, holistic design within the post-positivist framework. The factors created in the CFA did not identify expectations, aspirations and values as intertwined with other positive behaviours and so is not reflective of the overall student experience where the majority of students do express positive expectations, aspirations and values. This may be partly because the ‘Authoritised PEAV’ and the two main models (‘Supposed’ and ‘Clarified’ Independence) *all* emphasised

positive aspirations and values, so it was difficult for the CFA to unpick these as separate factors.

Statements which referred to student ownership, parental trust and respect did not group around any particular factor in the CFA. This may be due to these attributes being identified by a majority of students, as was identified in the qualitative findings. Importantly, just because they did not associate to produce a factor, does not mean they are unimportant. The MoSE highlighted this finding and this demonstrates an advantage of gathering information using mixed-methods.

It is also important to recognise Baumrind's (1991) notion that parenting styles must be identified as a typology, rather than a collection of items and hence the MoSE in the LoID (collected from qualitative findings) are likely to be more closely reflective of student experiences than the CFA quantitative analysis revealed because the layers in the LoID allow the different influences to reflect a typology, rather than a mere collection of items. Indeed, the CFA was just collecting 'items' to create factors of behaviours that group together, which Baumrind (1991) warned against. However, in this study, these groups are not fully reflective of all student experiences, since the CFA only accounted for 62.5 percent of variance in student responses. This suggests that there will be some students who would not appear to fit into any categories or, on the other hand, may feel like they fit into more than one. Nevertheless, as has been identified, there are many instances where the qualitative findings in the MoSE appear to map partly on to the quantitative findings which shows that triangulation has occurred. Indeed, because the qualitative data gathered more detailed information than the quantitative data, the MoSE is also more detailed than the CFA and this again demonstrates the advantages of using both quantitative data and qualitative findings in this mixed-methods study.

5.5 Summary of findings

Factors seen to predict successful student outcomes in the form of values, high expectations and aspirations are seen by Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013) who argue that an *academic trajectory* is created in the home during the child's early years. In other words, some parents/carers communicate high aspirations and values which are instilled in the student and contribute to intrinsic motivation. It is unclear whether this is the case for participants of this study as this was not directly measured. Although students were asked about their parental involvement over time, none offered information relating to their early years. However, the finding that practical PIB (DAPSS and PAPSS) do not specifically associate with outcomes overall suggests that the influences on attainment are deeper and intrinsic, as Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried (2013), Mead (1934) Lareau (2011) and Carolan (2015) suggest. Specifically, individual PIB such as communicating to students through gentle encouragement or asking questions was not seen to specifically relate to outcomes for students aged 16+. This is further echoed in the work by Sy, Gotfried and Gotffried (2013) who found that specific *academic instruction* for adolescents was not associated to outcomes. However, academic socialisation (discussion of aspirations, values and high expectations) in early childhood was linked to high outcomes at adolescence. It is important to note then, that the benefits of academic socialisation can be identified from early childhood through adolescence. However, the instruction style of involvement benefits outcomes for early childhood but does not appear to influence attainment for middle childhood or adolescence, as has been reflected in the current study.

In FE the practical elements present in Lareau's idea of concerted cultivation (Lareau, 2011) appear to be less important at this stage than is suggested for children in the Early Years. However, the elements of intrinsic motivation in concerted cultivation (formed through high aspirations, expectations, values, a sense of entitlement and a highly developed sense of self) which are seen to link to the formation of students' self-concept are still seen as important precursors to high outcomes in FE education. The finding that economic, cultural

and social capital appear to be less influential in determining student outcomes may be related to a lack of parent specialist knowledge for level 3 courses at college, where parents'/carers' skills in academic practices are only helpful to a certain extent and students are expected to take on more ownership through a realisation that parents/carers will be less likely to give reliable advice at this level of study. This is in contrast to the core subjects at school level, for which parents/carers are likely to have some knowledge.

The current study had too few participants in each of the ethnic groups enrolled at the case study college at the time of data collection to reliably conclude findings in relation to ethnicity and attainment. However, course and gender did associate significantly with student outcomes, where Health and Social Care students attained the highest UCAS points and in relation to average results, female students outperformed male students.

Independence and autonomy were perceived by students as highly important factors in the current study in the qualitative data. Students wanted to assert themselves to allow ownership. This was related to motivation, age/stage expectations but also the acknowledgement that parents/carers were often unable to help them due to the level of specialist study. However, elements of independence, ownership and assertion were not identified in the quantitative data to associate significantly with outcomes, suggesting that alternative factors are likely to influence attainment. Likewise, the MoSE showed that, although the majority of students were given independence, average grades across the two most common models ('Clarified' and 'Supposed Independence') were mixed. This firstly shows that quantitative and qualitative data are in agreement with each other, but secondly challenges other studies which have noted a link between independence and outcomes. The current study asserts that where other studies have noted a link between parental encouragement for independence and attainment, it is likely to be based on parental knowledge of student competence, rather than the act of encouraging independence simply resulting in higher grades for students.

There is a link between disagreement with pressure and higher grades. This reflects the ideas developed in respect to expectations, independence and motivation. If parents/carers have confidence in their children's abilities, then they may not feel the need to exert extrinsic pressure on their child and students are likely to attain highly. Those parents/carers who exert pressure have high values for education but low expectations, as has been recognised in the 'Authoritised NE-PAV' MoSE and are likely to attain lower grades. However, where a minority of students reported a) parents to make choices about work and reported b) that they did not feel that their choices were respected, higher outcomes were gained. This is reflected in the 'Authoritised PEAV' MoSE where parental interference is not seen to associate negatively with student grades, so long as it is coupled with positive expectations, aspirations and values. The main distinction here between the 'Authoritised PEAV' and 'Authoritised NE-PAV' is parental communication of realistic expectations, as highlighted as important by Murayama et al (2015). In other words, expectations that are realistic are likely to be based on parental/carer knowledge of students' past performance resulting in an association between high expectations and high outcomes (as seen for 'Authoritised PEAV'). It is therefore difficult to determine whether the act of parents/carers communicating high expectations is in itself an influence for higher attainment.

Where parents/carers are reported to fail to have a close relationship with their children and the student also lacks intrinsic motivation, lecturers and tutors are appreciated for their supportive role and, even though students gain lower grades than others, they are able to pass their course using this support mechanism. Peers too are noted to be a source of support. The majority of students experience some emotional support, close relationships and responsiveness to their needs. However, where students require alternative support, most report that they are able to assert a change in PIB. This is most likely to be identified for students who are overwhelmed with too much support than for students who do not feel they have enough. Students who report a lack of initial support and a requirement for more tend to report weak relationships or barriers such as parental work commitments.

Where parents' involvement is reportedly absent or weak, student relationships with their parents/carers is also likely to be absent or weak. These students are likely to require and appreciate tutor support and this can influence attainment in different ways, based on the level of students' intrinsic motivation. For some students, lecturer/tutor support was not found to increase or favour higher grades but, importantly, it was seen to allow students the opportunity to achieve a pass outcome for their level 3 course, whereas without this support, the student may have failed the course entirely. However, for some students reflecting the 'Headstrong' MoSE, lecturer support as well as a high level of intrinsic motivation were likely to result in higher than average grades, despite lack of currently perceived parental involvement. It may be the case that students in this category had parents/carers who communicated high levels of values, aspirations and expectations in the students' younger years and due to problems/negative life experiences, practical and emotional involvement has become weaker, but the foundations for intrinsic motivation had already been 'planted'. This is difficult to determine as this was not explored in any depth in the current study.

Clear links can be seen between the quantitative results (both significant and non-significant) and the qualitative findings where perceptions in relation to reported PIB are echoed across both. Specifically, the 'MoSE' in the 'LoID' are fully supported by quantitative data where similar student experiences have been identified across data sets. However, the qualitative findings allowed for a deeper understanding of the nuanced/fluid nature of PIB including the ideas of parental responsiveness. Different types of PIB were reported across gender, age, ethnicity and course, and although gender and course appeared to associate with outcomes, PIB was not seen to be an influential factor for attainment.

Strong agreement with the following aspects of PIB was generally associated with higher average grades:

e) Parental expectation that student would succeed in education

f) Inspiration given by parent to work hard for a job

g) Trust that the student can complete college work independently

h) Respect for student choices with college work

Although some individual behaviours appear to have a bearing on student outcomes (i.e. expectations, inspiration, trust and respect) the influences are likely to be more complex in reality. Causation suggests that one influence causes a particular outcome, when in fact, an association between two elements means the influence can be seen as reciprocal. (i.e. high expectations are identified because students have previously performed highly and so continue to do so, rather than high expectations in themselves driving high attainment). Additionally, expectations, parental aspirations and trust are not only likely to be formed by parental knowledge of students' past experiences but, in doing so, are likely to be developed over time and specific active (i.e. practical) forms of parental involvement are less likely to assist the student in gaining high outcomes at FE level of study. Parental attitudes communicated over time are seen to be more influential than particular parenting behaviours. Expectations, trust, aspirations, respect for student choices and knowledge of mother's academic achievements were seen to have associations with high outcomes for the majority of students across the quantitative data.

One of the most important findings is that the quantitative data often highlighted a minority group of students who opposed the norm and initially, for the statistically significant quantitative findings where this small proportion of students did not support the majority with respect to PIB and outcomes, it was considered that unreliability of data collection tools or participant confusion/mis-interpretation was to blame. However, where this small percentage of students who defied the majority appeared, they were seen to reflect the models created in the LoID collected from the qualitative data and so actually confirmed the existence of these MoSE. This is an important and exciting find in respect to triangulation and reliability of research tools where even the percentages of students in the categories were similar.

Research questions 4 showed clear agreements between quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was able to be clearly mapped onto the 'models of student experience'

in the LoID. However, as the Cronbach Alpha test collected statements of PIB together into larger categories instead of analysing the behaviour statements independently, it limited understanding in relation to the different models of student experience. In other words, it did not allow for a detailed analysis. Therefore, findings identified in the quantitative data for RQ4 along with information analysed from the qualitative data, suggest that PIB is reported to be more complex than the overarching categories of 'DAPSS+NEAV' and 'PAPSS+PEAV' which is an important finding in itself.

The study saw a high proportion of students who experienced trust, high expectations, respect for autonomy and independence. However, because these behaviours were noted for the majority of students and it was other behaviours that created slight differences (i.e. the differences between 'Clarified' and 'Supposed' Independence, the differences between 'Authoritised PEAV' and 'Authoritised NE-PAV' and the differences between 'Headstrong' and 'Dismissed'), the CFA was deemed unable to pick this out clearly. Indeed, the CFA worked by finding the most likely groupings, but did not have the nuanced, in-depth approach that the qualitative analysis had. Although the Cronbach Alpha test and the CFA were useful in identifying some relationships between behaviours, the qualitative data were viewed as more valid in its attempt to create links between perceptions which had culminated in the development of the LoID, because it was based on more detailed information.

Finding no significant differences between reported parenting practices for students of different age, ethnicity, course and gender challenged existing research. However, this study highlighted the under-researched area of parental involvement in FE and it is likely that the following aspects can explain the discrepancy between existing research and current findings:

1) Participant choice (other studies asked parents, the current study asked students)

2) Age/stage of study (other studies asked younger school-aged children, the current study asked students in FE)
3) Geographical location and cultural expectations (other studies were mainly conducted abroad but the current study was executed in the UK).

The lack of significant differences between parenting practices for these factors should not be seen as a limitation – more that it highlights a need for scope for further research in this area (see Chapter Six).

There is a conflict between student perceptions and college policy in relation to PIB and its influences on attainment for students in an FE college, as shown in the LoID.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Key findings

This chapter reiterates the research questions and how they were addressed, summarises the key findings in a Table (6.1) and explains the overall conclusions in relation to existing literature. Additionally, it highlights the project strengths by presenting specific contributions to knowledge and then reviews the limitations and offers recommendations in practice.

The project had four research questions which reflected the aims of the project (see page 1) and used a mixed-methods post-positivist approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. It qualitatively explored the themes that were important to students regarding PIB (RQ1) It explored whether student attainment had an association with a variety of factors (age, ethnicity, course, gender and perceptions of PIB) and whether students with high, medium or low grades report their feeling to PIB differently to each other (RQ2). The project also examined whether age, ethnicity, course or gender had any association with student perception of PIB (RQ3). Additionally, it investigated whether perceived PIB could be grouped to form styles of parenting (RQ4) and whether these styles associated with students' attainment. Both quantitative and qualitative findings were combined to propose models and an overall theory in relation to perceptions of PIB in FE (RQ4). Table 6.1 below shows the key findings:

Table 6.1: Overall Triangulated Findings and Research Questions

Research Questions	Findings
RQ 2 and 4	There was a statistically significant difference in grades for the following items: 1) Gender (females outperformed males) (Table 4.5)

	2) Courses (e.g. Health and social care students gained on average 142 UCAS points more than Travel and Tourism) (Table 4.5) 3) Students who agreed that they experienced the following behaviours gained higher average UCAS points than those who did not agree: • lifelong high parental expectations • aspirations • trust • respect However, this is likely to relate to the reactive hypothesis (see below). Moreover, the CFA did not show these behaviours grouping together. This may be because it did not account for 100 percent of variance in responses (only 62.5 percent). Additionally, although showing association with grades as individual items (statements), they do not associate with attainment *collectively* in the 'Clarified Independence' MoSE in the LoID, constructed using qualitative responses. 4) Students who did not report a feeling of pressure or parental/carer choice-making gained higher grades than those who did report these behaviours overall (section 4.3.1.1). 5) Students who had knowledge of their mother's academic achievements (section 4.3.1.2) gained higher grades than those who had no knowledge. The qualitative data showed that there is no obvious 'optimum model' in relation to students' experiences and perceptions of PIB and attainment which reflects overall qualitative findings in the MoSE identified in the LoID. However, students who 'strongly disagree' that parental/carer involvement would result in higher grades report the important role of lecturers and tutors. The majority of students interviewed (81 percent) report satisfaction with PIB

	and all interviewee students with low grades report satisfaction with their PIB (Table 4.9).
RQ1, 2 and 4	The Cronbach Alpha test showed that DAPSS was likely to be seen alongside NEAV and PAPSS was likely to be seen alongside PEAV. The four pre-conceived groups of DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV and the PIB statements associated with them failed to represent those parents/carers who are perceived to show 'no support', which has been highlighted more clearly through the LoID in the 'Dismissed' and 'Headstrong' models (Figure 4.7). The CFA (accounting for 62.5 percent of variance in responses) showed 4 factors (styles of parenting) (Table 4.12). Factor one (untrusting interference and pressure with low expectations) triangulated with the 'Authoritised NE-PAV' MoSE in the LoID (Figure 4.7) and Factor two (low expectations and aspirations) triangulated with the 'Dismissed' MoSE. In both models these behaviours are associated with lower outcomes. These may relate to the reactive theory and the need to recognise association, rather than causation. The LoID (Figure 4.7) found six reported models of student experiences, all of which were influenced by a range of extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Overall, students emphasised a desire for autonomy, independence and ownership for their college work.
RQ3	Age, ethnicity, gender and course were not found to associate with reported PIB (see Appendix P).

One of the key drivers for this study was to compare and contrast the case study college's position on parental/carer involvement with student perceptions. The college had mixed

messages regarding parental/carer involvement as the college prospectus (College X, 2018, p.5) uses the words ‘mature’ and ‘independent’ when referring to learners but an interview with the Director of Quality and Standards (DQS) and a review of the ‘Parental Involvement Strategy’ document highlighted that ‘Authoritised’ approaches such as regular communication, surveillance and forms of extrinsic motivation should be encouraged. This raised important questions about the potential influences of pressures in relation to PIB and student performance, since college policy largely encouraged these behaviours. The study found that, in agreement with the college prospectus, students largely emphasised independence, autonomy, trust and responsive emotional support and most students appeared to reflect the ‘Supposed Independence’ or ‘Clarified Independence’ MoSE. The college policy, however, is more reflective of the ‘Authoritised PEAV’ where parents/carers are expected to actively engage in encouraging their child to work harder, controlling their study time and organising hand-in dates, leaving little ownership for the students. Although this approach is associated with higher grades for a minority of students, many students have reported that they have experienced these behaviours previously but asserted their independence in response to the authoritised behaviours (and so no longer experience this approach). They suggest that overpowering PIB can often result in rebellion which would result in lower grades. Students in the ‘Authoritised PEAV’ MoSE report acceptance of this form of PIB. In other words, PIB is less likely to result in rebellion or frustration if it is based on responsiveness and acceptance of both student and parent/carer.

The Parental Involvement Strategy (Appendix E) failed to recognise the importance of responsiveness which encapsulates the idea that students and parents/carers often already have a non-verbal agreement on what is and what is not helpful to the student in terms of support mechanisms which have been built up over a period of time. The DQS also voiced the importance of parents/carers acting as a safety net and offering to help with work through showing an interest which reflects the ‘Supposed Independence’ MoSE. However, primarily, the difference between the college viewpoint and the student viewpoint is down to

trusting that students have (or lack) the motivation to do well. The college policy presumes that encouraging parental/carer engagement will result in higher motivation for the student and subsequent higher grades which appears to have been interpreted from Ofsted's requirement that parents/carers should be kept informed about student progress (but does not specifically suggest what parents/carers should be doing in the home) (Ofsted, 2016). However, this has not been found to be the case for the majority of students. Interestingly, those students who experienced the 'Dismissed' MoSE, (which represented a minority of students), suggested they did not attempt to seek parental support, since they thought it was too late for their parents/carers to change. They explained that they would not want to receive the support due to a lack of close relationships and were more comfortable seeking advice from teaching staff. Contrary to college policy/expectation, for students in this group, parental/carer involvement is not likely to be influenced by college policy or by greater communication with lecturer/tutors. Parents/carers and students are already engaging with and constantly adapting to a family context which reportedly appears to be deeply rooted in historical expectations, values and aspirations and is forged (for the majority of students) through responsiveness, understandings and close relationships developed over a period of time.

All the influences that students identified as important to their attainment were related to either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation as was identified in the hierarchy diagrams (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). Intrinsic motivation was frequently discussed through themes relating to student independence, assertion and ownership for learning. Extrinsic motivation such as parental surveillance techniques and asking questions encouraged a sense of intrinsic motivation in students so long as it was coupled with high expectations, aspirations and values, but only for a minority of students. For many students, PIB involving extrinsic motivation techniques was not accepted and students described asserting their independence in response to pressurised approaches.

Although high expectations, aspirations and trust appeared to associate with attainment in the quantitative data, this was likely to reflect the idea of the reactive hypothesis (Hampden-Thompson, Guzman and Lippman, 2013; McNeal, 2012) and the idea of causation (Pomerantz and Eaton, 2001; Shumow, 2014 and Hamlin, 2014) where parental/carer behaviours should not be presumed to result or produce a level of student performance but are a response to previous student performance (see Chapter Five). The quantitative data were not able to effectively pinpoint a minority of students who reported parental absent interest and neglectful behaviours and gained lower average grades, since the PIB statements did not ask specifically about these aspects. However, the qualitative data were able to identify these students, demonstrating an advantage of the mixed methods approach adopted for this study.

This project raises questions about the best ways to measure parental/carer involvement amongst college-aged students since it recognises that although certain behaviours may be more likely to group together than others, students report that parental involvement is a reciprocal process involving a complex network of expectations, aspirations, relationships and motivation. These aspects are often attuned or moulded by student assertion in relation to independence and ownership of learning. In this way it rejects simplistic bipolar styles of parenting, offered by Schaefer (1959) but builds on work by Skinner, Johnson and Snyder (2005) who suggested that parenting consists of multiple dimensions (and, crucially, whose work also included adolescent students). This idea of different dimensions has been visually constructed as layers in the LoID which shows how themes are presented across six models of student experience and so has challenged and replaced the researcher's initial ideas of the DAPSS, PAPSS, NEAV and PEAV (see Chapter Four) where these parenting behaviours are integrated in a more complex theory in relation to parenting styles and their association with attainment.

The LoID demonstrates that most students experience high levels of trust, autonomy and independence but that these aspects are deeply rooted in student-parent/carer relationships

and general emotional support and do not appear to associate with attainment overall. Reasons for the lack of association here may be due to the majority of students reporting aspects of emotional support (both in general and specifically with college work) and positive relationships, both of which were reported across the grade span and so an association between the two could not be made. This challenges ideas by Chen and Ho (2012) surrounding emotional support and achievement but the difference between this existing study and the current one may be due to the current study's concentration on UK college-aged students. However, a minority of students in this project who reported behaviours that reflected a 'neglectful' nature with low expectations and aspirations for attainment and weak or negative parental relationships gained lower grades. The LoID theory suggests that those students who are in the 'Dismissed' or 'Authoritised NE-PAV' models do less well in relation to attainment and those in the 'Authoritised PEAV' or 'Headstrong' do better in relation to attainment but represent a minority of students. Students in the 'Clarified Independence' model may report 'uninvolved' parents/carers (Maccoby and Martin, 1983), but there is a distinction here between these students who have complete independence in their studies because they seek it and those who reportedly experience general neglectful PIB in the 'Dismissed' MoSE.

The LoID demonstrates the multi-faceted nature of parental involvement where students' perceptions indicate that parental behaviours and parental attitudes relate to each other in different ways and are likely to have been created through a dynamic mix of student assertion, parental responsiveness and the wider expectations communicated to "college-stage" students. It is important to note the distinction here between 'college-age' and 'college stage', for age in itself only appears to associate with PIB inasmuch as it relates to expectations of independence and ownership of learning post-16. It is not the case that some of the MoSE are related to younger or older students; enrolment at college is a key factor, not the specific age of the student. Overall, if parental involvement is able to directly affect attainment, then it is more likely that this happens during the students' younger years

(see Chapter Two), since there is no evidence to suggest that individual parenting behaviours or styles are able to directly foster high outcomes in students at college stage.

6.2 Contributions to knowledge

The contributions made to knowledge include:

1) Terminological contributions (PIB)
2) Definitional contributions
3) A contribution to parental involvement literature in the under-researched area of FE
4) Theoretical contributions
5) Unique methodological contributions
6) Specific investigation into perceptions of PIB and attainment in an FE English college.

Firstly, the term Parental Involvement Behaviours (PIB) was formulated in order to attempt to categorise and explore 'the things that parents/carers themselves do' when they are perceived to be 'involved' with their children's education at college from the view of the student. Although other researchers have sought to categorise in similar ways (see literature review, specifically Table 2.1), most have concentrated on finding attitudes relating to particular known parenting styles and none have focussed solely on parental behaviours for learners above the age of 16 in the same way that the current study has done. The current study introduced a new set of PIB statements which were used as a framework in which to support students in responding to and explaining their views and experiences of their PIB and specifically highlighted the student voice in line with the need to focus on the student regarding PIB as opposed to involving the parent/carer as many previous studies have done. Additionally, a review of parental involvement literature (Fan and Chen, 2001) found a lack of an agreed definition for parental involvement and so the current study offered its own precise definition with regard to FE students which was:

"An exchange between parent/carer and student that has <u>directly</u> influenced the student in regard to their college education and attainment".

This includes three types of support:

Three support-types:

1) '**Emotional support'** (showing interest, encouragement, praise, questioning, listening, reassuring, empathising)

2) '**Practical support'** (split further into two parts: a) **Economic Capital** (financial resources which can be used to buy tools and other resources which will directly impact the student and their learning on the course e.g. a laptop or specialist equipment) b) **Cultural Capital** (parental/carer knowledge, behaviours, competence, ideas, organisation, sign-posting, skills and dispositions which are communicated to or passed down to students giving them an educational advantage at college)

3) 'Academic Socialisation' support techniques which relate to parental/carer communication of expectations, aspirations and values.

The concentration on college-age students has filled a gap in knowledge. Existing parental involvement research focused on primary and secondary aged pupils and so there are a number of differences in findings between the current study and existing research. These differences may also relate to problems associated with comparability of existing literature since studies in this area have differed by type of parental involvement (homework help, general interest, communication of high expectations), measure of involvement (frequency as opposed to quality of parental interactions) and have differed in location of study (outside the UK). Indeed, most studies which attempt to relate parenting styles to attainment for children have been completed in the USA. These have been completed using a variety of research tools, with a variety of ages and in educational establishments that are not likely to be reflective of the English FE college context or assessment procedures (i.e. BTEC). This project highlighted the importance of research into parental involvement for BTEC level 3 extended diploma students who were over the age of 16 and the tools used are unique to

this project (i.e. the PIB statements have been formulated independently of another project and have been developed and adapted partly as a result of conversing with FE students themselves).

The choice taken to involve students and not parents/carers was also an important decision in relation to uniqueness of study, since parental involvement has often been explored in existing studies by asking parents/carers to contribute their understanding of parenting styles and what effect they think their involvement has on their children (see Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried, 2013, Blair, 2014 and Lam and Ducreux, 2013). However, the current study looked at parental involvement practices as perceived by the student. It argues that this viewpoint is the most helpful in terms of analysing PIB because the way in which PIB is perceived by students is of more importance than investigating how it was intended. The current project not only sought to ask students' opinions of PIB (i.e. to what extent the child feels that the parent/carer trusts them to complete work independently) but also asked students to make predictions based on subjective experiences and constructs of their reality (i.e. do you think more parental/carer involvement would make you attain a higher grade?). The study created hierarchies of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation emphasised the differently reported influences for students' attainment and do not relate to parental behaviours alone (despite this being the focus of investigation) showing that attainment for this age group is affected by many factors, which may differ from parental involvement influences for younger learners. The current project challenges ideas by Robinson and Harris (2014) who claimed that Authoritarian approaches for adolescent students were associated with lower grades. The current project found that for a minority of students, these approaches were associated with higher grades, so long as this approach was coupled with positive expectations, aspirations and values and was well received by the student highlighting the importance of parental/carer responsiveness. Although Sy, Gottfried and Gottfried's (2013) discuss how the academic trajectory and academic socialisation within an individual's early years may contribute to future attainment (and may have contributed to student grades in the current

study), this was difficult to identify, since the project did not specifically ask about this and the study was not longitudinal. However, the project was important as it has succeeded in highlighting the distinction between college-aged and school-aged students and PIB within the context of FE, which is under-researched in many capacities, but most notably under-researched in relation to PIB and BTEC student attainment.

In relation to theoretical contributions, the RD (Figure 4.4), EoM (Figure 4.5) and IASO (Figure 4.6) highlight how these important influences for student attainment appear to relate to each other. These diagrams were formed from the ideas suggested by Bazeley (2016) in relation to interrogation of data where data is not only analysed thematically but also compared, contrasted and related using sets of questions to unpick specific relationships between student perceptions of parental involvement behaviours. The MoSE in the LoID (Figure 4.7) presents a theory of PIB for college-aged students and can be potentially used as a framework to study these influences in other college environments. The final MoSE model also offers a contribution to knowledge because it unpicks the 'dismissed' and 'headstrong' models of student experience which have not been highlighted previously. Existing research (see Maccoby and Martin, 1983) suggests that students with 'uninvolved' parents/carers exist but is rather vague about its consequences on the student and their attainment and fails to acknowledge the drive of the headstrong model which includes students who attain highly, despite their reported unsupportive home environment.

Thirdly, perceptions of PIB for college-aged students were explored in a unique way through methodological choices which had previously not been addressed in this area of study in existing literature. Methodological contributions include the use of the post-positivist paradigm in which to study parental involvement which has not been observed in existing studies and allowed both qualitative and quantitative data to be triangulated and to be equally acknowledged (where most existing studies take a positivist approach and favour purely quantitative analysis). The post-positivist framework was used to gather different data types using a mix of three methods: focus groups, questionnaires and interviews (see

Chapter Three) and had a mixed-methods approach and, as such, gains information through both quantitative and qualitative means within the paradigm of post-positivism. Using a mix of tools to attempt to gain a rich understanding ensured that student perceptions had been explored as fully as possible from different viewpoints and using different research instruments to enable as full a picture as possible to be presented for analysis. Using triangulation strengthened the project findings since student perceptions could be triangulated and is again unique in relation to existing studies. Other studies (for example Chen and Ho, 2012; Ceballo et al, 2012; Lam and Ducreux, 2013; Blair, 2014 and Dubose et al, 2014) in this area (although not specifically for FE) have focussed on one research tool (mainly parent and child questionnaires) and many (for example Baumrind, 1967; Schaefer, 1959 and Skinner, Johnston and Snyder, 2005) have explored parenting styles but have not attempted to explore associations between PIB and academic outcomes for FE students in an English college. This methodology could be used as a framework in future projects in this area of study.

Lastly, students involved in the study were not only asked about their perceptions of parenting styles per se, but were also requested to consider whether or not there was an association in relation to PIB and academic outcomes. Questions 6a, 6b and 6c of the questionnaire asked students to comment on whether they thought their grades would be likely to change their parents' PIB and question 14 asked whether having parents/carers more involved would result in better grades for students (see questionnaire: Appendix J). The researcher found no other published studies in the UK for FE students that have asked them to consider the association between PIB and BTEC attainment using the same direct technique as the current study.

6.3 Recommendations, observations and future research

The current project offers one main observation (which cannot be suggested as a recommendation since findings were reflective of a case study) and three recommendations (two for the college in question and one for further research in this area).

1) The majority of students voiced a strong sense of student independence, autonomy and ownership and students reported that parents/carers are usually responsive to needs and respectful of wishes when arriving at a mutual agreement concerning PIB. Some students report that they have had to assert themselves to gain independence and respect from parents/carers and it appears that they have been intrinsically driven to do this once they have reached this stage in their educational journey. A minority of students reported to have 'disinterested' or 'neglectful' parents/carers who showed little interest in them or their studies and this was associated with lower grades. College-aged students would welcome parental expression of general interest in their lives. They appreciate parental responsiveness and respect for independence in relation to completing their college work since student rebellion can result from parents/carers who show 'Authoritised' approaches when this is unwanted and this can result in lower grades.
2) College policy which communicates an expectation for a particular level of parental involvement may not be necessary or helpful to parents/carers and college students who, for the most part, have already had discussions around their expectations for PIB and appear to be driven by intrinsic motivation which is unlikely to be affected by external factors, except for a minority of students who accept the 'Authoritised-PEAV' model of parenting. The college communicates mixed messages between college policy, the opinions of those who write the policy (senior management), and the prospectus which demonstrates a need for the college to come up with an overall agreement about how it communicates its expectations for PIB.
3) The interview process identified that students who 'strongly disagreed' that parental involvement would result in higher grades also reported the important role of lecturers and tutors as helpful for motivation and support. As level three learners are adolescents or young adults, it is recommended that the college concentrates its efforts on supporting individual students (both emotionally and practically) in their study, possibly through more frequent individual tutorials, which were mentioned by

students in the ‘Dismissed’ MoSE instead of inviting parents/carers in for parents’ evenings or encouraging staff to engage with parents/carers or impose expectations for PIB, since students suggest this is unlikely to alter parental involvement or their attainment.

4) Further recommendations relate to further research in this area, possibly through post-doctoral work. The same methodological framework could be used to explore PIB in different colleges in other parts of the UK, since this project was limited to one FE college and so is viewed as a case study which cannot be generalised. Alternatively, a new data collection method could include gathering data through aspects identified in the LoID and asking questions which specifically relate to these models and behaviours. Additionally, as individual behaviours at college-stage have not been generally seen to associate with attainment, completing longitudinal research in relation to academic socialisation (see Chapter Two) may pave the way for further exploration of the important influences for PIB and attainment which crosses into college-stage participants. The finding that knowledge of mothers’ academic achievements was associated with student attainment was unexpected and this is another potential area for further investigation.

6.4 Limitations

The main limitations and challenges of the project are explained below. Where appropriate, research decisions have been justified and/or explored to recognise their potential influence in the interpretations of results and overall conclusions. The first limitation to be highlighted is the dual role that the researcher had due to their current status as a member of staff at the college. This idea of ‘insider research’ is explained in section 6.4.1 but is also embedded within the other three areas of limitation: project focus (section 6.4.2), participant access (6.4.3) and data collection and analysis (section 6.4.4).

6.4.1 Insider research

As explored in the methodology (section 3.2.6), the researcher had a dual role within the college. At the time of gathering and analysing data, the researcher taught on foundation degree programmes but had previously taught on level 3 course programmes and hence had knowledge and interest in BTEC students and parental involvement. Although no research was conducted with any students who were known to the researcher, it could be argued that a number of things may have influenced the project as a result of insider perspectives and insider knowledge, as well as the obvious connection the researcher made to the college by wearing their staff badge in the data collection activities. Knowledge of working in the institution in which the research was conducted may have blinkered the researcher's perspectives regarding PIB. These limitations are analysed in detail in section 3.2.6.

6.4.2 Project focus

Although parental involvement was the focus of the project, the project did not seek to ask parents/carers about their PIB for reasons set out in section 3.3.1.4 (justification for participant choice). Whilst the student perception has gathered huge amounts of data concerning PIB, it may be suggested that not involving parents/carers themselves may be a drawback of the study. However, the focus of this project was to understand PIB from the student perspective.

Use of perceptions in research may be viewed as a limitation. However, as explained in the methodology, 'critical realism' was adopted as a post-positivist approach. Interpreting perceptions was not seen as problematic as long as recognition was given to the fact that information gathered relating to students' experiences was a reflection of reality and not the exact truth as individuals construct their thoughts and opinions in different ways.

The project sought to compare PIB and attainment across ethnicity, gender, course and age and found no difference in PIB across the factors. In the case of ethnicity, this contradicts

studies which see student ethnicity as a key variable in student attainment (e.g. Chen and Ho, 2012; Flouri et al, 2014). While some studies have noted associations with attainment and ethnicity, this has not been found in the quantitative data. This may be due to a relatively small sample size in the current project (i.e. the proportions of Black and Asian groups were small in comparison to White British) and this may be viewed as a limitation in the current project. Three minority ethnic students suggested in the qualitative findings that parenting style was influenced by ethnicity, but this was not identified as significant overall.

Another potential limitation was a lack of exploration around social class in the main study (although this was attempted and rebuked by students in the pilot phase), since college education is often associated with students from a working-class background. Investigating social class in relation to PIB and attainment would have contributed another (potentially important) factor in understanding college-age PIB.

The project outcomes cannot be generalised as the data were collected in only one FE college and so was reflective of a case study.

6.4.3 Participant access

Reliance on gatekeepers meant that not all level three courses at the college were represented in the study as access was denied to some subject areas. Additionally, it was not possible to include students from every course to participate in every research tool. This was due to both time constraints (the data had to all be collected within eight months of the same academic year – see below) and gatekeeper barriers. In addition to this the project was limited in participant range. All students were enrolled on a level three BTEC programme as this was seen to be the most popular awarding body utilised by the college and so was chosen to remain consistent. However, this could also be viewed as a restriction as other awarding bodies (e.g. ‘CACHE’ and ‘City and Guilds’) were not included.

6.4.4 Data collection and analysis

Due to a lack of prior mixed-methods UK research into PIB in FE, a new research typology was devised which offered predetermined PIB statements to be used as a platform to discuss PIB experiences. These statements may have acted as limiters in the following ways:

a) Their use may have inhibited, impacted or influenced/framed student responses in particular ways and may have been seen as a disadvantage by only offering a narrow view of PIB for the quantitative data. Although this is acknowledged, themes derived from each research tool in the qualitative findings go beyond a mere reflection of the statements as can be seen in the numerous nodes, super nodes, themes and super-themes identified in the two hierarchies of motivation (see Chapter Four).
b) There was potential bias in the language used in the PIB statements. As an example, students may have been uncomfortable by describing their PIB as 'controlled' or 'pressured'. However, throughout the project, no PIB statements were seen to be redundant, suggesting that they matched an array of experiences for students.
c) Although students were briefly asked about their perceptions of the statements in the focus groups, including if they could think of any more PIB statements that could be added, in practice this did not give students sufficient time to fully reflect on their opinions of the PIB statements provided as this question was asked at the end of the focus groups as students were getting ready to leave.

The quantitative data collection procedures were based around Likert Scale responses. Likert Scales are seen to be problematic in a number of ways (see Chapter Three). Likert Scale perceptions are not based on a continuum meaning that students have to fit themselves into a category which may not fully reflect their experiences/opinions. Indeed, students were not asked to define what they interpreted 'strongly agree' or 'strongly

disagree' to mean. Student choice in the interpretation and indication of the Likert Scale format may have differed from student to student. However, these problems are difficult to measure. As PIB statements were being measured as a related phenomenon, Likert Scales were seen as advantageous to formulating an idea of categories of PIB through the process of CFA (Categorical Factor Analysis) and perceptions were cross-analysed for students between qualitative and quantitative data sets. Another potential problem in using Likert Scales to gather perceptions into parental involvement relates to the way in which students reported PIB as influenced jointly by both parents/carers. As an example, mothers and fathers' behaviours may differ and students had to decide and report on those behaviours that were most influential to them overall, whether they were in a single parent or nuclear family arrangement. Indeed, the current project did not distinguish between the behaviours exhibited by mothers and fathers separately and was explored collectively as 'parental involvement', making it difficult to decipher the differences in influences between parents/carers.

The PIB statements were designed to identify what kinds of parental involvement behaviours were experienced and there was no initial expectation that some parents/carers would not be involved at all. Students who felt their parents/carers had no influence are likely to have given answers which were confined to either disagreeing with the statements or choosing 'neither agree nor disagree'.

Time constraints meant that for second year students, all responses for focus groups, questionnaires and interviews had to be collected across a period of eight months. These constraints influenced the researcher's decision to collect information from only 5 focus groups and halt the questionnaire data completion after 240 students so that the next phases of data collection could be completed before students were in the exam stage, where data collection would not be seen as respecting students' needs at a potentially stressful time of year.

The volume of qualitative findings may be seen as a challenge to positivist practices. However, in the current study this is not viewed as undermining the post-positivist framework, because the researcher held the role of a 'knowledge creator' when collecting data; rather it is evidence of the adoption of a mixed-methods approach. Additionally, the volume of data gathered was due to student enthusiasm and interest in the subject.

6.5 Concluding thoughts

Investigating perceptions of student PIB for college-aged students has offered a fascinating insight into the rich dynamics of parental-student relationships including responsiveness, the reactive hypothesis and the strength of student assertion. It has also highlighted parental behaviours (for a minority of students) which suggest 'neglect' and 'dismissal', but also recognised the advantages of intrinsic motivation for 'Headstrong' students who show great resilience in the face of difficulties. Most students in the study expected and desired independence and ownership of learning which contradicts college policy and general perceptions around parental involvement and attainment, highlighting a distinct difference between the stages of school and college. Lastly, the process of asking students about parental involvement and attainment is likely to have highlighted the importance of progress within education and allowed opportunity for the majority of students to reflect positively on the PIB they receive and have received over time. Indeed, parental experiences in early childhood are more likely to have a bearing on and pave the way for influential factors in relation to high attainment, (which centres on students' intrinsic motivation) rather than individual parental behaviours at college-stage.

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Appendix A: Consent form and ethical approval form for the project

An Investigation into the Relationship between different types of Parental/Carer Involvement and Student attainment for young people (16+ years) in Further Education

As part of my research towards a PhD in Education at the University of Bedfordshire I am conducting a research project into students' perceptions of their parent/carer(s) involvement in their college education and whether these 'parenting behaviours' have any relationship with student outcomes (grades). For this I will hand out questionnaires, carry out focus groups and interviews and I will need access to the students' grades across the college.

Please sign the consent form below. Many thanks, Judith

.....

I give my permission for this research to be carried out and for my answers in the interview to be reported in the study (note all responses are completely anonymous and confidential and so individual answers will not be traceable):

Name (Print): [redacted]

Position: Director Quality, Performance + Standards

Signature: [redacted]

Ethical Approval granted from the Research Ethics Committee:

Applicant declaration

I understand that I cannot collect any data until the application referred to in this form has been approved by all relevant parties. I agree to carry out the research in the manner specified and comply with the statement of ethical requirements on page 1 of this form. If I make any changes to the approved method I will seek further ethical approval for any changes.

Signature of Applicant:

Date: 7th October 2015

Signature of Director of Studies:
Date: 8th October 2015

This form together with a copy of the research proposal should be submitted to the Research Institute Director for consideration by the Research Institute Ethics Committee/Panel

Note you cannot commence collection of research data until this form has been approved

SECTION B:To be completed by the Research Institute Ethics Committee:

Comments:

You seem to have taken a great deal of care in thinking through some of the ethical issues involved in this proposal. However, it may be that your research serves to reinforce some students' awareness of the lack of family support that they have in relation to peers. I do think that, as you carry out this research, you may need to be very careful in your response to some of the sensitivities related to, for example, students whose families either take very little interest in them, or are under a great deal of stress and cannot support them very well, and/or have been bereaved of one or both parents, and/or whose experience of family support is negative for whatever other reason. What will you do to defuse the situation if a student becomes upset during the focus group interviews (assuming that s/he does not just walk out)? Or, afterwards, if you discover that one or more of the students has been very upset by your line of questioning but did not tell you at the time? I suggest that you discuss this with your supervisors and your colleagues in the college prior to starting on your research.

Approved Signature Chair of Research Institute Ethics Committee:

Date: 13.10.15

Appendix B: Consent forms for participants

Focus groups

An Investigation into student perception of different types of Parental/Carer Involvement and attainment for young people (16+ years) in Further Education

Focus Groups - As part of my research towards a PhD in Education at the University of Bedfordshire I am conducting a research project into students' perceptions of their parent/carer(s) involvement in education at college level. I wish to determine what kinds of in-home interactions and parental involvement behaviours might be associated with high student attainment for students who are 16+ years.

Involvement in this study requires you to reflect on the involvement of your parents/carers and will allow you to consider their contribution to your education. This research should not harm you in any way. If you feel uncomfortable participating then you have a *right to withdraw* at any time. Withdrawal from this activity will not disadvantage you in any way.

Confidentiality: Any information you provide will not be shared with anyone else in the college without your permission *unless a safeguarding issue is raised*. The name of the college and the students involved will not be used when reporting the research outcomes. If you have any concerns or questions about the research, please ask me or email:

Judith.Darnell@study.beds.ac.uk

My email address should also be visible on the whiteboard. If you lose or forget it and want to get in contact about the research, just ask your tutor for my details and he/she will be happy to pass them on.

Alternatively you can contact my supervisors:

Professor Uvanney Maylor: Uvanney.Maylor@beds.ac.uk

Dr. Neil Hopkins: Neil.Hopkins@beds.ac.uk

……

If you agree to be involved then please sign your name below:

Sign:_____ Date:_____

Thank you for agreeing to be involved in the focus group activities. Your contributions and opinions are important.

If you wish to be sent a copy of the final project and its outcomes, please add your email address below and tick the box: ☐

_____

An Investigation into the

Relationship between different types of Parental/Carer Involvement and Student attainment for young people (16+ years) in Further Education

Interviews - As part of my research towards a PhD in Education at the University of Bedfordshire I am conducting a research project into students' perceptions of their parent/carer(s) involvement in education at college level. I wish to determine what kinds of in-home interactions and parental involvement behaviours are linked to high student attainment for students who are 16+ years.

Involvement in this study requires you to reflect on the involvement of your parents/carers and will allow you to consider their contribution to your education. This research should not harm you in any way. If you feel uncomfortable participating then you have a *right to withdraw* at any time. Withdrawal from this activity will not disadvantage you in any way and will be discussed with you prior to the start of the interview.

Confidentiality: Any information you provide will not be shared with anyone else in the college without your permission *unless a safeguarding issue is raised*. The name of the college and the students involved will not be used when reporting the research outcomes. If you have any concerns or questions about the research, please ask me or email:

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My email address should also be visible on the whiteboard. If you lose or forget it and want to get in contact about the research, just ask your tutor for my details and he/she will be happy to pass them on.

Alternatively you can contact my supervisors:

Professor Uvanney Maylor: Uvanney.Maylor@beds.ac.uk

Dr. Neil Hopkins: Neil.Hopkins@beds.ac.uk

……..

If you agree to be involved then please sign your name below:

Sign:_____ Date:_____

Thank you for agreeing to be involved in the interview activity. Your contributions and opinions are important.

If you wish to be sent a copy of the final project and its outcomes, please add your email address below and tick the box: 

_____

Judith Darnell

Invitation letter for interview

X College

jdarnell@*******.ac.uk

*****290479

Dear _____

Hope you are well and your course is going ok ☺

You may remember you recently completed a questionnaire for me about parental involvement as part of my doctoral research in education.

After reading your responses I'm really interested in meeting with you to do a short interview (that sounds scary – really it will be just like an informal chat!) which will only last about 20 minutes.

The meet-up can be done to fit around you and your commitments as I realise how busy this time of year is.

Please either tell your tutor that you are interested and they will contact me or alternatively send me an email (top right of this letter) stating a time and date you would be free.

If you wish to, you may bring another person along with you for support However, if you are happy to come on your own then that is also fine!

Thanks so much. I look forward to hearing from you!

Judith ☺

Appendix C: Questions for the Director of Quality and Standards (DQS) at college X

Questions for the DQS

Meeting agenda (overview):

Explain my role and my research focus

I wish to discuss the creation of the "Parent/Guardian Involvement Strategy" including:

1) *Where the ideas in the strategy came from and why they are deemed as important to student success.*

2) *What theory, legislation or government publications have supported or have underpinned the content in the document*

3) *The relationship between student autonomy and 'active' parental involvement*

After explaining the nature of the interview I will ask the DQS to sign a consent form and explain the right to withdraw at any time

Guidance questions:

- What do you understand by the term “parental involvement”?
- What are the college expectations of parents being involved in supporting their child at the college?
- Why do you think parental involvement is important for the academic success of college aged students?
- Where did this idea come from? (It is public perception/parental expectations/student expectations/just obvious or parental involvement theory?)
- Can you comment on the theory/legislation/government publications that may have underpinned the content in the document?
- The document notes that the college wishes to ‘compete effectively’ with local schools and sixth forms through creating “strong channels of communication” with parents. Are you saying that in order to compete effectively at this age, parents have to be encouraged to be involved as <u>much</u> as they are in schools?
- Is there a perception that parents who have children in schools are *more* involved?
- Discuss the perception that “the more a parent is involved, the better the success of the student”…
- What does “success” look like?
- Tell me about how you perceive the relationship between student autonomy and parental involvement
- Can you explain the section of the document (page 2) that discusses parent surveys indicating the need for “accessible systems of communication for support to enhance opportunities for student success”
- Have you asked students about parental support systems and communication with college, if so, what did they say?

- Lastly, the parents' section of the college website (in the keeping in touch link) states that "We feel students perform better when their parents take an active role in their education". What do you view an 'active role' to look like?

Many thanks for agreeing to take part and thank you for your input

Appendix D: Excerpt of Interview with the DQS

What do you understand by the term parental involvement?

DQS: Er, to me it looks like how are we engaging parents with students to support them on their journey whilst they are here……in a nutshell.

Me: What kinds of involvement do you think are successful?

DQS: Well when we were creating the document, when I was updating the document because it did exist a few years before I arrived. What we did is we looked back at then what different areas were doing. Hence why it's quite a kind of like optional things that people might do to a certain extent because what we had found is that not one size fits all. So for example, not every area do a parents evening. Coz actually some areas parents don't want to come to a parents evening or you know that hasn't worked for them or whatever it might be. So we tried to do is find out what everyone was doing and of those things they were doing, what was working and equally what were the things they were doing but one took a huge amount of time but didn't engage with parents. I think in the old strategy it had like there would be a newsletter every so often and there'd be this and there'd be that and actually it was so constraining that the areas were taking so much time trying to create these

things, never then getting any feedback to know whether parents actually kind of thought it was useful, did it have any impact, etc etc and actually took the focus away from working with the students as they should be. Does that make sense? So that's kind of when we updated it we tried to make it ok: there must be parental involvement but actually there's a number of ways you can do that and it's kind of a pick and mix option of what might work best

Me: In your department?

DQS: In the department. Yeah yeah.

Me: Ok, so leading on.. What are the college expectations of parents being involved in support for their child?

DQS: In an ideal world they will all be 100% supportive of their child/children and they will engage with the college. The reality is, some of those parents don't want to do that. Erm, and I think it is our duty that we try and engage with them, but equally I guess there will be a point where they still don't want to engage with us. Think it's also trying to make it useful to the parents and for them to understand coz actually we all work in education so we understand the jargon, don't we and the lingo and actually when you don't work in education you kind of don't always get that and I think also the difference we've now got is obviously that if a student is over 16, we have to have their permission to be with the parents and yet when I started teaching you could just obviously ring the parents and I know from my own personal experience as a teacher, actually when you can engage with the parents, even with the most problematic of students you can generally win them over and they'll improve and they will be motivated because it's kind of more you will reinforce they will be reinforcing at home what you are trying to reinforce in college. Does that make sense? Erm. Sorry might have gone off on a tangent…

Me: That's ok.

DQS: Remind me what I was just meant to be talking about?

Me: It was about college expectations.. So in terms of the college, what do you expect to see parents doing?

DQS: I think we want them to be supporting their children. We want them ideally to, again there's a number of different things they could do. But some areas now are doing a parents evening at the beginning of the year. So that's a real opportunity for them to say this is what the course is, this is our expectation of the students, here's the assessment schedule, here's the handbook. You know when the assignments are due kind of thing. Please work with us to kind of help them go forward and I think also about attendance and things like that so actually you know I think our expectations are that students are here all the time. If they are literally too sick to get out of bed then obviously we'd appreciate your help in terms of ringing us about that but equally if they're not here then we want your support in that because it is really important that they're here. Now we've been able to pilot the parent portal on Moodle…..?

Me: Yes, I've seen it, yes.

DQS: So.. when we wrote that we only piloted in one area but more areas are doing it this year and actually having some really positive feedback from parents. Because obviously it's accessible all the time, it's very easy for them to just have a quick look. Equally then if their son daughter's telling them one thing then they're got a reference point to go 'hmm really?' kinda thing

So I suppose from a college point of view we absolutely want parents involved and interestingly what we find though is it is very different in different areas so the sixth form as an example have a very high parent engagement. Very very high and we don't have to do a lot to get that parental engagement really. Although obviously they are the ones that piloted the parent portal to very good success, they do parents evenings, they have consultation evenings, they do literally everything… whereas we have other areas where some parents

just don't want to kind of get involved in that, you know they see their son daughter now you know they're 16, they're sort of independent…

Me: Ok. So in terms of in home support, so you've said about contact with teachers and parent evening and the portal. So, in terms, but in terms of the within actual home, what kinds of support do you think are appropriate for the parents to be giving the students, in terms of helping them.

DQS: Erm, I think it's about……I think it depends doesn't it? I mean obviously you'll know your own children and you'll know when they need a bit of erm direction, erm, and I think that's where actually assessment schedules are so important for parents so they know when work is due or when exams are due or you know when they're saying 'actually I wanna go out with my mates' and it's like well hold on, have you done this piece of work, or haven't you, you've got an exam next week haven't you? So do you think you need to do some revision and things like that. I think it's very difficult for a college to say this our expectations of you as a parent. I think that crosses a line that… yeah, I don't er, you know, I think that's a line we probably shouldn't cross because obviously who are we to say how they should parent their own children, you know as long as those children are safe and all those things. And I think that's probably the difference you see with the 6th form parents as an example, who, erm, can't think of a better phrase, but might be pushier parents. Or more aspirational for their children…….even to the point where they want their child to do a-levels for example, irrelevant of the fact that they haven't got the criteria to do the A level. You know, it's kind of that, but in my mind you're gonna do a levels because there is nothing else because of their own experience. So I suppose as a college it's trying to inform them as much as possible through open events, through the prospectus, enquiries and guidance, etc. Coz quite often, students do come with their parents. Don't often see that many at those sort of events on their own. It's trying to inform the parents at the same time about expectations and also trying to give them that information. And lots of areas now, or some areas I should say, are doing a like a stu- sorry, a parent handbook. So you know, obviously if students go out to

employers we give them an employers' handbook – this is our expectations, we give the students one, and actually so from a parent point of view: actually this is what we'd like you to do… this is how we'd LIKE to engage with you but again I think you've not got to cross this line into and you must parent your children a certain way… but that link with the college then might be that we'd really like you to encourage your son/daughter to carry out, you know if they are in college 12 hours a week they should be doing 12 hours a week study outside of lessons…. if they've got assignments due can remind them and just check with them that they're doing it. So it's not, it's more written I suppose as guidance. Do we think this would be the best thing for your son daughter as opposed to 'we expect from you to du du du du…' . Coz that's…You know I think you could get lots of disgruntled parents saying actually I know how to parent my kids and so I know that If I did that to them, they'll go the other way and absolutely. So they'll have a different approach and they'll put that, pressure is the wrong word, - you know, just reinforcement.. and I think also just trying to reinforce that, the expectations, that high expectations.. you know it's not just about getting a pass, it's trying to get the best grade they can and think about all the options they could progress to. Coz I think it's how we try an engage parents in that. And actually an example where parental involvement has actually brought about a change. I don't mean to keep giving 6th form examples but it is a 6th form example.. where parents asked could they have information about UCAS earlier so normally it happens, traditionally it happens in the autumn term of the second year and they said actually can we have that information earlier because a lot of open events are in the summer and we will be able to take them around and so they've changed that now so that it is actually takes, although there are follow up events in the autumn, it's a big thing in sort of May/June time so that parents and students are informed so they can then go, ok yeah well let's go off and look at x university..

Me: Ahh, ok. Cool. Next one; Why do you think parental involvement is important for the academic success of college students?

DQS: They are only at college, generally, what 16 hours a week, or something like that. There are obviously a lot more hours in the week than that and I think if you haven't got that support of the parents, and I mean the students having that support of the parents really, then as much as a good experience as they might be getting here, you are always going to be kind of fighting 16 years' worth of whether it's lack of interest or just not as much kind of raising that aspiration or things like that and I also think it's an opportunity to try and, not educate parents but just make them a bit more aware of what's out there a bit broader because we all only know what we know, if that makes sense, so if your family's all , I don't know, all farmers then you're gonna know about farming but you're not gonna necessarily know actually that there's a branch off from that that means you can go off in all these different directions. So I think you kind of, I think for the most successful, and again that's not always always true, actually coz I've taught students before who are living independently and have had a torrid time, but equally I suppose they've got that support through another mechanism, it might not actually be their parents, coz I think actually when we are talking about parents it is about carers, that wider kind of support network, but you know, I think it enhances the student success going forward in the majority of cases.

Me: Cool. And so where did the idea come from that parental involvement was key to academic success?

DQS: Erm,… I think, erm.. I can only tell you sort of from updating that, I suppose, coz I obviously never did the original document. But I suppose it probably is a bit of common sense I think and from all our own experiences, if you think when you were at school then you'd always have your parents evenings, wouldn't you? You'd have your consulation, you'd get your report, all of those things.. So I think it is very much a parent expectation, especially from coming from a school where it's very , erm.. quite a lot of contact. If the student isn't there then they are ringing home straight away and they've got no, there's not that erm, barrier about you can't have permission, etc. and I think then for some parents, the relevancy of them coming here is a bit of a culture shift and I think if we're trying to make

students more independent which we are… I think, you know if you think a student on average is here for 2 years, maybe longer, but let's say they are here for 2. That first year you'd expect more parental engagement, or you'd hope for it and a maybe bit less in the second year because equally we are hoping that by the time they leave us, they are independent enough to get a job, go to uni, get an apprenticeship, etc etc. So it's a bit like if you are on a level 2 course you're not actually a level 2 student at the beginning of that, we're teaching them those skills aren't we and you're hoping by the end, they're walking out as a level 2 student…. Erm. I don't know if there's any theory and I probably should have checked before so I'm sorry. I don't know.

Me: Well I think there's a lot of theory for younger children, but I was just wondering if there was any theory underpinning it that you know of that is for 16-18.

DQS: Not that I know of…Apart from, er, not theory, but I suppose people's experience of, when you do engage with parents, it's generally positive, you know it works out generally positive. but you're always gonna have that aren't you..?

Me: Yeah. Oh, erm, well this is a similar question… Well it's phrased slightly differently.. So can you comment on any theory/legislation/government publications that have underpinned the content in terms of you need to have this link..

DQS: Erm, no, or only apart from, I suppose the one thing I probably could reference is Ofsted. So Ofsted has an expectation erm that parents are involved. And, there is a parent survey…… So if you are inspected, the students have to do a survey, employers have to do a survey and parents have to do a survey. Erm, so however we absolutely don't do it just because they say, to be honest with you, but actually that is an external force who will ask parents about their experience… yeah.it's the same as a school... it's more it asks a number of different questions but it's about you know, how are they support,…are they aware of what's going on in the college, do they know about the students' progress, etc etc. So erm, and I think that's right as well to ask that group. Although we're not – touch wood – due an

inspection, erm, those questionnaires are available all the time so we are encouraging students, employers and parents to do them so we can get some feedback that way… because we can once there's over 10 respondents, we get a break down of the responses so that's quite a nice external sort of view for us, which is sometimes quite hard for us to quantify, coz if we sent out a parental survey, we'd probably have quite a low return rate, if we're honest. So it's quite a nice way to get it.

Me: Ok. That's useful to know about Ofsted, thanks for that. Ok, so this is another quite long question…The document notes that the college wishes to compete effectively with local schools and 6th forms through creating strong channels of communication with parents.. So in that, are you saying that in order to compete effectively at this age, parents have to be encouraged to be involved as MUCH as they are in schools?

DQS: Sometimes… probably….So I think, the 6th form obviously when I said that's a much better direct comparison for a parent to think ok why would I let my son leave the school they've been in for the last 4 years erm, and they know the staff, they know the environment, they're quite happy, let them stay at that 6th form as opposed to going to our 6th form I suppose. That's quite an easy, direct thing, isn't it? And one of the things we know from those students' parents who want their son/daughter to do A levels…..They absolutely want that engagement! So I think we've got to be at least, not necessarily providing like for like because I don't think it is that, I think it about as it says, providing those opportunities and channels which, you go through that journey together in order for your son/daughter to get to wherever they wanna get to. I think on more vocational qualifications that's less ,erm less clear cut because actually you're more focussed on is this the right curriculum choice for me? I think it's a secondary thing then and it's how am I going to be kept up to date with what's going on to a certain extent..does that make sense? Coz actually If you want to be a brick layer, well why would you stay at your 6th form you do that? They're not going to offer it. Does that make sense? But I think that it's still our duty that we are trying to engage parents and equally we kind of give that upfront. You know, that is us doing our diligence…that We

keep in touch with them, as much as we possibly can and equally, quite importantly actually they can ring us at any time, so they know who are the right people.. you know… go to switch board and ask for Judith.. can you remember her surname.?. no..? Do you remember what..? (Laughs) You know… No actually, you are the key person, this is the personal tutor, this is the manager of the area, here's all our contact details. You know and that's one thing I wanted to say about the handbook, when you do parents evenings right at the beginning, they are the key bits of information that straight away really help and actually the students then know actually I'm not going to be able to play you off against me now because there's that link already and that quite often can stop a lot of low level, because students are always doing, and in fact, everyone, human beings are always gonna push those boundaries so It's that's whole trying to be more on the same page so it's a bit like with parenting, one parent oh well that parent said its ok and play parents off against each other, essentially students can do the same with, 'oh college said it was alright, we don't have to go in today'…. And you know, does that make sense, so it's just trying to keep that routine and structure and boundaries for students. To allow them to flourish and grow, but providing them that structure.

Me: Ok, next question: Can you discuss the perception that the more a parent is involved, the better the success of the student…? Is that true?

DQS: I don't think I would have data to prove it…if that makes sense. I wouldn't be able to say actually if I had 10 students who had huge amount of parent involvement and 10 students who didn't would those 10 students have done better. I don't think, we've got it, you know I don't think I would be able to give you data on that… I think it's much more anecdotal about erm, where parents are involved and are supportive and are joined up in the approach with the college that that generally leads to students staying on the programme and achieving and I think attendance is a massive one there. So actually, if students aren't in and you know, you want someone to ring home erm,…You know you ring up…. I've dropped them at the front door and yet they've still not managed to get into the building.. and quite

often if you catch that really early and again with you and the parent and the student to just have an informal meeting to say 'ok, what's going wrong?' coz there'll be something underlying and I think if you can figure that out together then that student will feel safe I guess in terms of going forward. I think, the more that they don't attend, for example and let's say you can't speak to the parents, because they've not given permission… that can cause more of a problem because obviously the longer they are not here, the more they will fall behind and the more actually for them it's just not an achievement thing for them to come back to. You're always going to have to odd occasions where parents will say, I don't care. I don't care whether they're actually going to achieve. I just want them to come every day. Kind of… I want them out of the house sort of thing. But I think that's the minority. So I think you've got to think about the majority and…erm, and from my own experience of teaching, personally, where you've had those relationships with the parents that has really made a massive difference in understanding those students and being able to work with them in order to get them where they want to go on to.

Me: And also, have you asked students about parental support systems and communication with college and if so, what did the students say about it?

DQS: Hmmmm.. ckkk… Well in terms of the parent portal, students have to tick that they are happy for their parents to have access, so although we have to ask them about permission at the start of the course, you know, and they can.. they have to opt out now, so it used to be they had to opt in, we changed that – quite rightly!! – So now they have to opt out. And even then we have to just kind of go through some checks and to make sure they're not just doing that.because…erm, well either it's not safe or whatever. But, equally even if they have given permission, if then for the parent portal they still have to give permission again.. if that makes sense. Because obviously that's a bit more accessible and it's a bit more….it's live as well in terms of the information on there. Erm, now in the most part. – and I don't know if we did do a survey – that would be before my time, like a formal thing with students.. but in the most part, most students agree…. however you do get some students who think actually I am 16

now. You know “I’m an adult, I don’t want my Mum and Dad to know anything about what’s going on!” Yeah. I think this is a bit where, that 16 to 18 bracket is very much a bit of, well that’s what the students want, however, what’s BEST for them and what keeps them safe actually isn’t quite what they want. So I suppose you are trying to balance those things.. Does that make sense?

Me: The parents section of the college website in the ‘keeping in touch’ link states “we feel students perform better when parents take an active role in their education”… What do you think an active role looks like?

DQS: Erm. I think probably similar to what we’ve said already… So I think it is about engaging with the staff in the college, trying to ask the questions, keep that link with them, I think it’s very much in the home,… being interested in what they’re doing in college, asking if they’ve got stuff on… thinking about next steps in advance, rather than “Oh, you’re finishing college next week what’re you gonna do?” kinda thing. Erm, that, so as I said before that raising aspirations but that might look different for different parents and different families…because of those, you know…what, not, we’re not a business like John Lewis..where people come in and they wanna buy something and if you can give them what they want to buy at a price they are happy with then, you know, they’re happy aren’t they? What we’ve got is we’ve got individuals who are all incredibly different and you’re gonna have to make some judgement calls on what’s the best thing for on those individual cases … does that make sense? So an active role for one parent might be quite different to an active role for another because the student is different…

Me: Yeah. Great. Thank you very much!!

DQS: No problem

Appendix E: Parental involvement strategy

(Page one)

Parent/Guardian Involvement Strategy

Introduction

The College aims to be a first choice provider and to provide expert and individual guidance and advice to parents and prospective students. The purpose of this paper is to compete effectively with local schools and sixth forms through clear and strong channels of communication with parents/guardians.

We want all of our students to enjoy their time at Bedford College and to be successful in their chosen courses. We believe that a partnership between students, staff, and where appropriate parents/carers is key to student success. This Strategy aims to balance our intention to involve parents/carers of students aged under 19 in our support partnership, with an appreciation of the students' rights to confidentiality and our encouragement of an adult learning environment

We will ensure that parents/guardians receive minimum levels of communication outputs which include appropriate documentation: these can include reports, timetables, course information, and opportunities to meet with course tutors/teachers: parent evenings, disciplinary meetings, achievement evenings, student activity events and access to Moodle with their child. We will seek consent from 16-18 age groups who are studying full or part time to contact parents/guardians as this fits with the College values.

The parent/guardian involvement strategy relates to:

- the provision of College and course-related information to parents/carers of prospective and existing students
- the provision of non-sensitive student related information about academic progress, attendance and disciplinary matters
- the provision of welfare-related information to parents/guardians of residential students.

(Page two)

Scope of this strategy

This strategy is aimed primarily at parents/guardians of full time students aged 19 and under at the start of their course, and for SLDD students who may be deemed as vulnerable adults aged 19 and over. The term 'parent' refers to anyone deemed to have parental responsibility.

Parents of prospective under 19 students

The College will provide up-to-date information which increases parent/guardian awareness of curriculum options, to enable them to be well informed and play a vital role in supporting their son or daughter in making career/course choices. The College will provide pre-entry information through both electronic and printed media and face to face communications including:

- Course information and progression opportunities including destination data via the website or by request
- Attend any interviews with son/daughter
- Parents' section of the College websites
- General information about the College including events and enrichment activities through College open days and school careers/options events

Parents of existing under 19 full-time students

Parent surveys indicate the need for accessible systems of communication to develop effective mechanisms for support to enhance opportunities for student success. This will be achieved through the marketing team co-ordinating:

- Parents' section on the College's websites
- Access to Pro-Monitor with their son/daughter

(Page three)

Student-related information

The College aims to work with parents of full-time students who are under 19 at the start of their course, in order to seek their support in maximising achievement and success. It is our policy to keep named parents or guardians informed about academic progress including absences and disciplinary matters. We aim to build on this through accessible communication systems, whether these are electronic, by telephone or print based:

- Opportunities to meet with course tutors/teachers/personal tutors at a mutually convenient time to discuss progress or concerns
- Direct contact to report absence, lateness or misconduct where appropriate
- Student progress reports issued once a year providing a minimum level of information (BSF only).
- Invitation to parents' evenings to discuss your son/daughters progress
- Opportunity to attend disciplinary meetings (if appropriate)

Any communication with parents/guardians is conditional on the student's consent.

We recognise that young people come to the College to be treated as adults with rights as well as responsibilities and therefore need to ensure we have their consent to share information with parents/guardians. The College will seek consent from students who are under 19 at the start of their course. Consent will be collected by tutors during the student's first day of induction and held in the Student Information File (SIF). Such general consent relates only to information about student progress including attendance or disciplinary matters, and the student may withdraw consent at any time.

Sept. 2015-2016

Appendix F: Perceptions and Constructivism: A review

Aspects of the constructivist notion have been apparent since 560 BC where Buddha and Heraclitus are reported to have considered how humans create thoughts and make sense of reality (Pritchard and Wollard, 2010). However, it was not until the twentieth century that phrases such as ‘constructivism’, ‘constructionism’ and ‘constructs of reality’ were developed and the concepts widely understood within the social sciences, psychology and education.

This section intends to investigate the notions of constructivism in relation to the development of perceptions, as perceptions are the key focus of the current study. Exploring the development of perceptions is important because it lays the foundation of understanding on which the data can be viewed, analysed and discussed as well as considering important aspects of the project such as validity and reliability.

Firstly, it is important to analyse the distinction between ‘constructivism’ and ‘constructionism’ in order to be clear about the appropriate use of terms. Payne (2009) identifies that they are both concerned with building knowledge ‘structures’. However, one distinction is that ‘constructivism’ is concerned with exploring the way in which individuals construct and understand ‘reality’ by contemplating observable experiences in the world (Pritchard and Woollard, 2010; Jonassen, Myers and McKillop, 1996; Adelsberger, Collis and Pawlowski, 2002; Burr, 1995; Payne, 2009, Andrews, 2012; Berger and Luckmann, 1991 and Hammersley, 1992). ‘Constructionism’, on the other hand, has been described by Jonassen, Myers and McKillop, (1996) as an activity where an individual is engaged in the construction of something external or sharable. Payne (2009) gives an example of building something for others and, although this could relate to learning a new concept, highlights a practical element to this activity. Further, Andrews (2012) explains that social constructionism is concerned with individuals communicating with the intention of creating something (this could be very general such as joint understandings of the world or specifically relating to one small task), whereas social constructivism relates to individuals

cognitively constructing and organising their world experiences in conjunction with others. These world experiences are likely to be communicated as 'individual perceptions' but, importantly, the thoughts behind these perceptions are constructed through social experiences (Vygotsky, 1978) where understandings are unlikely if not impossible to exist in isolation. Crotty (1998), offers descriptions of these terms which are more subtle than the definitions above. He suggests that 'constructivism' relates to individual meaning-making where the mind categorises and understands experiences relating to unique experiences (in a similar stance to understanding of reality (above)), but that 'constructionism' refers to both the generation of and the transmission of meaning between people and is affected by culture which shapes the way concepts are seen/viewed. Despite the variation in explanations, throughout the literature search it should be noted that the terms have often been used by scholars interchangeably and are also likely to be used differently across disciplines (Payne, 2009; Andrews, 2012; Pritchard and Woollard, 2010; Jonassen, Myers and McKillop, 1996). It is important to be clear then, that for the purposes of the current study, when discussing the development of students' perceptions and social construction of a viewpoint, the term 'social constructivism' will be used but in exploring social learning practices (i.e. development of thought and learning through discourse in relation to Vygotskian approaches), the term 'social constructionism' is used. Both terms are discussed in detail below.

Another concept that must be explored here for the purposes of gaining an in-depth understanding of the complexities of social constructivism is 'essentialism'. Burr (1995) discusses that humans are likely to be viewed as having an individual essence, nature or personality but that, in reality, regardless of our individual differences, we are all likely to think feel and behave differently depending on who we are associating with, the task we are undertaking and why. This links to the notion of situation specificity of behaviour (i.e. behaviour is shaped by and is specific to individual contexts) and this needed to be kept in mind when conversing and interacting with the students.

Further, the distinction between realism and relativism is evident when exploring the relationship between knowledge creation and knowledge discovery. Andrews (2012) maintains that social constructivism must view individual's perceptions in light of a process where knowledge has been created in relation to current understandings and prior experiences and is not merely as simple as information waiting to be 'discovered'. Realism and relativism can be seen to be two polarised perspectives. Realism suggests that interpretations of an individual are true of an independent reality (i.e. in principle, knowledge can be gained in some way about the reality). Relativism, on the other hand, is tentative in its approach to understanding based on social constructivist practices and identifies that nothing can be known for certain. It suggests that we will never be able to recognise and understand the accuracy with which we identify statements made by others (Burr, 1995; Andrews, 2012). Andrews (2012) sees social constructivism as a relativist stance and suggests that it is anti-realist. Seeking a deeper understanding and in trying to resolve the challenges of the dichotomy of standpoints in relation to realism and relativism, Hammersley (1992) recommends adopting neither position fully, but encourages the researcher to recognise the stances of both and explore the limitations of both. He situates his understanding midway between both concepts and calls this position subtle realism. He indicates that there is no direct contact or access to reality but recognises that thoughts and feelings can be represented, rather than reproduced and therefore outcomes cannot be definitive and need to be observed with caution. This also reflects the idea of critical realism, where reality can be approximated but never fully understood (Bhaksar, 2011; Groff, 2004). As will be seen later, as perceptions are integral to the study, this is important to identify in respect of both the quantitative and qualitative data and the ontological stance of the study where critical realism asserts that perceptions are likely to correspond to behaviours, even if they do not reproduce experiences exactly.

Conclusions – investigating perceptions and constructivism

Knowledge is a human creation and is informed by an individual's social and cultural surroundings. Constructivism enables the researcher to acknowledge the complex nature of gathering and understanding perceptions. Although a challenge is presented to the researcher to acknowledge that individuals will construct their thoughts subjectively, it is also important to understand that subsequent communication of these constructs or perceptions, then, needs to be carefully considered when investigating perceptions in research. In exploring the notion of social constructivism, it is important to conclude that in addition to the participants' ability to structure their own knowledge and communicate that knowledge, the researcher will also gather perceptions and create knowledge whilst drawing on past experiences and in this way the challenge is three-fold:

1) *Identifying constructions of knowledge* (how individuals think about and perceive their reality)

2) *Communicating the constructs of knowledge to others* (participant choice of language, sentence structure, choice of stories to tell which will draw upon their constructions of knowledge)

3) *Perceiving the communications of the constructs of knowledge* (researcher constructs of knowledge influenced by perceptions and past experiences)

The challenges that the notion of constructivism brings to the research needs to be regarded carefully and perceptions must therefore be viewed with caution as there are likely to be inconsistencies as to whether the researcher has gathered a true depiction of the reality of PIB in the home. Students' perceptions of the differences in PIB between primary school and college age may have been remembered incorrectly due to the passage of time. Despite the recognised limitations of gathering perceptions and the challenges of social constructivist practices, it is important to note here that the way in which parental behaviours are perceived by students is integral to understanding the nature and purpose of this study. The study is not concerned to understand what parents physically do or attempt to do to support

their children (if so the researcher would have attempted to observe in-home student-parent interactions). The focus is on how these behaviours *are perceived* by students. Some parents may have the very best intentions when showing interest in work. However, if students perceive this as 'annoying' or 'nosy' then for that individual student, these behaviours are likely to be counterproductive. Others, on the other hand, may welcome this interest and perceive it positively. The notion of constructivism is integral to the research and has important implications for the analysis stage of the project.

Constructivism has been a crucial concept to explore within this project because it impacts and affects the development of and understandings drawn from the project in several ways. An investigation of constructivism has highlighted:

a) That students construct their own knowledge of how they experience PIB in the home and that this perception may not accurately reproduce reality, but is likely to reflect (Hammersley, 1992) or correspond (Berger and Luckmann, 1991) to something in the real world but should not be taken as truth or fact.

b) That the researcher will use own mental processes to receive, understand and organise information relating to student perceptions in a unique way which will be underpinned and either directly or indirectly affected by upbringing, own relationship with parents, knowledge of and reflection on own parenting style, social class and deep-rooted cultural family structures, past educational experiences and current perceptions of college students' parental practices, both from experience of talking to parents themselves at parents evenings but also in discussion with other staff members and the director of quality at the college in question.

c) That learning and attainment are strongly linked to social constructs of knowledge and that understanding can be increased through the process of dialogue, but that the balance between this and autonomous, independent learning practices is still to be explored and debated. This is particularly important for students aged 16+ because students are

expected to develop skills associated with self-regulated learning. This is not to suggest that a students' learning ever exists in complete isolation but perhaps examination of these learning practices is needed to reveal optimum conditions for knowledge creation and attainment at this age in relation to the need for social exchanges. Within the phenomenon of the structures and creation of knowledge, there are two sub-divisions of constructivism: radical constructivism and social constructivism. Radical constructivists believe that humans develop their views completely independently. However social constructivists see discourse with others as imperative to the creation of knowledge (i.e. views and perceptions are developed within social interactions). The nature of qualitative research within this project specifically is likely to be associated with social constructivism, since the researcher sought to gather views through discourse (focus groups and interviews). The questionnaire did not involve discourse but, I would argue, was still likely to include an element of communication (although written, not verbal) because of the way the researcher had constructed the focus of the questionnaire through language (i.e. the phrasing of the questions) and layout (students were asked to respond within a Likert scale structure and were also asked to write longer responses in places). In this way, it would be difficult for students to express their views of PIB completely independently because the nature of the way in which I sought to gather knowledge in the questionnaire was a form of communication, albeit there was no opportunity to engage in dialogue itself.

Appendix G: Conversion tariff for BTEC level 3 and UCAS

UCAS TARIFF POINTS	BTEC LEVEL 3 QUALIFICATIONS (QCF)				
	BTEC LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA	BTEC LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA	BTEC LEVEL 3 90-CREDIT DIPLOMA	BTEC LEVEL 3 SUBSIDIARY DIPLOMA	BTEC LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE
420	D*D*D*				

400	D*D*D				
380	D*DD				
360	DDD				
320	DDM				
280	DMM	D*D*			
260		D*D			
240	MMM	DD			
210			D*D*		
200	MMP	DM	D*D		
180			DD		
160	MPP	MM	DM		
140				D*	
120	PPP	MP	MM	D	
100			MP		
80		PP		M	
70					D*
60			PP		D
50					
40				P	M
30					
20					P

Appendix H: Pilot study documents

An Investigation into student perception of different types of Parental/Carer Involvement and attainment for young people (16+ years) in Further Education

Questionnaire:

As part of my research towards a PhD in Education at the University of Bedfordshire I am conducting a research project into students' perceptions of their parent/carer(s) involvement in education at college level. Parental involvement has long been a factor under scrutiny for school-aged children. However, college stage is a grey area and the idea of parental responsiveness with be investigated. I wish to determine what kinds of in-home interactions and styles of parenting are linked to student attainment for students who are 16+ years. I also wish to explore the effects of parental expectations, shared positive educational values and aspirations, a change in amount or type of involvement offered by parents with increasing student age as well as whether students have the power to dictate the amount and type of involvement offered by parents/carers and their subsequent attainment.

Confidentiality: In order for me to correlate attainment with the answers you are providing, I will need you to supply your name and date of birth. However, any information you provide will not be shared with anyone else in the college without your permission. The name of the college and the students involved will not be used when reporting the research outcomes. If you have any concerns or questions about the research, please ask me or email: Judith.Darnell@study.beds.ac.uk

Alternatively you can contact my supervisors:

Uvanney Maylor: Uvanney.Maylor@beds.ac.uk

Neil Hopkins: Neil.Hopkins@beds.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Completion of the questionnaire and providing your name and date of birth confirms that you have consented to this information being used for my research.

BACKGROUND

Please write your full name: _____

Please circle your gender: male female prefer not to say

Date of birth: _____/_____/_____

White British White Irish Gypsy or Irish Traveller White Other	Black Caribbean or Black British Caribbean Black African or Black British African Black other	Asian or Asian British: Pakistani Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi Asian or Asian British Indian Any other Asian background
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean Mixed: White and Black African Mixed: White and Asian	Chinese	Other (Please state) _____ Prefer not to say

Any other mixed background		

Please circle your ethnicity:

Which course are you studying? _____

What level course are you studying? 1 2 3 4 (please circle)

Please write down your GCSE grades (or predicted GCSE grades) in the space below:

Subject	Grade/outcome
e.g. Maths	*e.g. C*

Question ONE:

Please complete the online survey http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22000973 and tick the following box which **best describes** your **parents/carers** socio-economic status:

Precariat	

Traditional working class	
Emergent service workers	
New affluent workers	
Technical middle class	
Established middle class	
Elite	
I do not feel as though my family and I fit into any of these categories	
I prefer not to say	

(Savage et al, 2013)

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR MAIN CARER(S) OR PARENT(S) JOINT INVOLVEMENT OF YOUR EDUCATION OR BASED ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF ONE MAIN PARENT/CARER IF APPLICABLE:

Question TWO:

On average, how often does your parent/carer ask you about your college work? *(tick ONE appropriate box)*

Never	Occasionally	Moderately	Often	Very Often
(Not at all)	(Every month or two)	(1-2 times per week)	(3-4 times per week)	(Every day)
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Question THREE: Please tick ALL that apply when completing the following statement:

Since I started at college my parents/carers have helped with……

Homework ☐

Research ☐

Essay Writing ☐

Checking work or giving advice ☐

Encouraging me to complete by the due date ☐

Giving me space and time to study when needed ☐

Buying resources for me to help with college work (i.e. folders/pens/laptop/paper) ☐

Question FOUR: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate response for each statement:

Box A					
Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
"My parents/carers like to be in control of the amount and quality of college work that I do"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"I rely on my parents/carers to manage and help me with coursework"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have not asked them to"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"I sometimes feel pressurised by my parents/carers to do college work when I do not really want to"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"My parents/carers presume that they know more than me about how I should be doing my college work"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**

"My parents/carers do not really trust me to get on with my work myself"	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
"My parents/carers make choices about my work"	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)

Question FIVE: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate response for each statement:

Box B					
Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
"My parents/carers gently encourage me to complete my work for college"	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
"If I am struggling, my parents/carers will try to guide me in my college work"	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)
"My parents/carers are willing to talk to me about my college work, rather than getting involved with the essay writing itself"	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)

"My parents/carers believe that I know as much as them about how to get on with my work"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"I choose when and how to do my college work"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"My parents/carers trust me to do college work myself"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"My parents/carers respect my choices when it comes to college work"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**

Question SIX: Comment on the following statements:

"If I performed badly in a piece of coursework, my parents/carers would react by getting more involved with my work and may try to take control"

_____

_____

_____

"If I did really well in a piece of coursework, my parents/carers would be more likely to leave me to get on myself and trust me to do my work the way I want to"

_____

_____

_____

"My coursework grades would not change the type of involvement my parents/carers offer"

_____

_____

_____

Question SEVEN: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate response for each statement:

Box C					
Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
	(4)	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**

"My parents/carers are not sure how well I will do at college"					
"My parents/carers are unsure whether I will succeed in education"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"My parents/carers do not have particular aspirations for what job I get"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"My parents/carers do not think education is particularly important"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"I do not place great importance on my education"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**

Question EIGHT: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate response for each statement:

Box D					
Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
"My parents/carers expect me to do well at college"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"My parents/carers have always known that I would succeed in education"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"My parents/carers have inspired me to work hard so I can get the job that I want"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"My parents/carers think it is important to get a good education"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**
"I value a good education"	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**

Question NINE: Comment on the following statement:

"My parents/carers find it hard to support me due to the nature of the subject I am studying…"

_____
_____
_____

Question TEN: Tick the statement which is true for you:

In terms of your education and learning, have:

a) *Your parents/carers **reduced** the amount of involvement offered as you have got older*

b) *Your parents/carers offered the **same amount** of involvement as you have got older*

c) *Your parents/carers i**ncreased** the amount of involvement offered as you have got older*

Question ELEVEN: Comment on the following statement by writing in the box below:

"The way in which my parents/carers are involved with my learning and education has changed over time"

Question TWELVE: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate responses:

Box E					
Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
"I dictate ***how much and what kinds*** *of involvement my parents/carers have with my college work"*	**(4)**	**(3)**	**(2)**	**(1)**	**(0)**

Question THIRTEEN: Please comment on the following statement:

"Having my parents/carers more involved with my college work would make me attain a higher grade"

Thank you for taking time to complete the questionnaire. Your help is very much appreciated ☺

Focus group questions (Pilot)

Welcome the group and explain the nature of the study. Explain informed consent, rights to withdraw, guarantee of confidentiality and a guarantee that the research should not harm them. Get consent forms signed if agreeable.

Warm up:

1) Display a laminated A3 sheet that clearly shows a picture of a teenager and the following statement:

"At age 17, I don't need my parents' support with college. I can do it myself"

Discuss.

2) *Large sheet of paper displays:*

Do you think your parents value education at college for you?

How do you know this?

DISCUSSION

PIB categories:

3) Laminated cards are given to each student. I ask students to choose 12 of the statements they most agree with (statements are taken from the DAPSS and PAPSS low expectations, low aspirations and low values high expectations, high aspirations and high values). Go round the group and ask students to read out all

the numbers on their cards and ask them to explain why they have chosen 2 of those parenting behaviours. Discussion.

Do you think there are any behaviours that I have missed out? Is there anything your parent does that hasn't been accounted for?

THEN ask students to find numbers 15-22.

What is an 'aspiration'?

What do your parents expect you to do with your life?

Are you leading your path or are your parents?

How will this affect your ability to succeed at college?

Do you think the amount of money your family has contributes to how well you will do at college?

Social class questions:

4) Ask students to complete the social class questions. Did you find it easy to answer? Which bits were hard to answer? What do you think makes up social class? **What aspects of social class do you think links to parent behaviours?**

Appendix I: Main focus group questions and activities

Focus group questions

Welcome the group and explain the nature of the study. Explain informed consent, rights to withdraw, guarantee of confidentiality and a guarantee that the research should not harm them. Get consent forms signed if agreeable.

Warm up:

Display a laminated A3 sheet that clearly shows a picture of an adolescent teenager and the following statement:

"At age 17, I don't need my parents' support with college. I can do it myself"

Discuss.

Values:

Large sheet of paper displays:

Do your parents value education at college for you?
How do you know this/why do you think this?
DISCUSSION

PIB categories:

A set of laminated cards are given to each student. The researcher asks students to choose statements they most agree with. Go round the group and ask students to read out all the codes on their cards and pick two that they would be willing to explain to the group i.e. the reasons why they feel this way or the PIB they experience. Discussion.

THEN ask students to find PIB statements relating to expectations and aspirations.

What is an ‘aspiration’?

What do your parents expect you to do with your life?

Are you leading your path or are your parents?

How will this affect your ability to succeed at college?

Appendix J: Main questionnaire and consent form

An Investigation into the Relationship between different types of Parental/Carer Involvement and Student attainment for young people (16+ years) in Further Education

Questionnaire

As part of my research towards a PhD in Education at the University of Bedfordshire I am conducting a research project into students' perceptions of their parent/carer(s) involvement in their college education and whether these 'parenting behaviours' have any relationship with student outcomes (grades).

Confidentiality: In order for me to find relationships between parenting styles and results, I will need you to supply your full name and age. However, any information you provide will not be shared with anyone else in the college without your permission *unless a safeguarding issue is raised*. The name of the college and the students involved will not be used when reporting the research outcomes. If you have any concerns or questions about the research, please ask me or email: Judith.Darnell@study.beds.ac.uk

Alternatively you can contact my supervisors:

Prof. Uvanney Maylor: Uvanney.Maylor@beds.ac.uk

Dr. Neil Hopkins: Neil.Hopkins@beds.ac.uk

Prof. Patrick Carmichael: Patrick.Carmichael@beds.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Completion of the questionnaire and providing your name and age confirms that you have consented to this information being used for my research. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. You will not be disadvantaged by not taking part.

Please supply your *college student number*:

_____

☺ **Please tick this box if you wish to participate in additional parts of the study if needed** ☐

If you would like to be sent a copy of the final project and its outcomes, please tick the box and write your personal email address below: ☐

_____

BACKGROUND

Please write your full name:

_____

Please circle your gender: male female prefer not to say

Age: _____

Please circle your ethnicity:

White British White Irish Gypsy or Irish Traveller White Other	Black Caribbean or Black British Caribbean Black African or Black British African Black other	Asian or Asian British: Pakistani Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi Asian or Asian British Indian Chinese Any other Asian background
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean Mixed: White and Black African Mixed: White and Asian Any other mixed background	Other (Please state) _____	Prefer not to say

Which COURSE (subject) are you studying? _____

What LEVEL are you studying? 1 2 3 4 (please circle)

Do you have a private home tutor? Yes No (please circle)

Do you have a recognised learning disability or SEN? Yes No

Who is your personal tutor? _____

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR MAIN CARER(S) OR PARENT(S) JOINT INVOLVEMENT OF YOUR EDUCATION OR BASED ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF ONE MAIN PARENT/CARER IF APPLICABLE**:**

Question ONE:

On average, how often does your parent/carer ask you about your college work? *(tick ONE appropriate box)*

Never	Occasionally	Moderately	Often	Very Often
(Not at all)	(Every month or two)	(1-2 times per week)	(3-4 times per week)	(Every day)
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Question TWO: Please tick ALL that apply when completing the following statement:

Since I started at college my parents/carers have helped with……

Homework ☐

Research ☐

Essay Writing ☐

Checking work or giving advice ☐

Encouraging me to complete by the due date ☐

Giving me space and time to study when needed ☐

Buying resources for me to help with college work (i.e. folders/pens/laptop/paper) ☐

Question THREE (a): Please fill out these boxes for your parents/carers.

Question	MUM or carer					
What is their job?						
What is their highest level of education? (Please tick the relevant box or leave blank if you do not want to give this information)	*Less* than 4 GCSEs grades A-C	4 or *more* GCSEs grades A-C	3 or more A levels	A degree qualification	Other (please specify)	I don't know the answer to this question
How much do they earn? (Please tick the relevant box or leave blank if you do not want to give this information)	Less than £15,000 per year	Between £15,000 and £24,999 per year	Between £25,000 and £34,999 per year	Between £35,000 and £45,000	More than £45,000 per year	I don't know the answer to this question

Question THREE (b):

Question	DAD or carer					
What is their job?						
What is their highest level of education? (Please tick the relevant box or leave blank if you do not want to give this information)	*Less* than 4 GCSEs grades A-C	4 or *more* GCSEs grades A-C	3 or more A levels	A degree qualification	Other (please specify)	I don't know the answer to this question
How much do they earn? (Please tick the relevant box or leave blank if you do not want to give this information)	Less than £15,000 per year	Between £15,000 and £24,999 per year	Between £25,000 and £34,999 per year	Between £35,000 and £45,000	More than £45,000 per year	I don't know the answer to this question

Question FOUR: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate response for each statement:

Box A					
Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
5b"If I am struggling, my parents/carers will try to guide me in my college work"	5	4	3	2	1

8a"My parents/carers expect me to do well at college"	5	4	3	2	1
5c"My parents/carers are willing to talk to me about my college work, rather than getting involved with the essay writing"	5	4	3	2	1
8b"My parents/carers have always known that I would succeed in education"	5	4	3	2	1
4a"My parents/carers like to be in control of the amount and quality of college work that I do"	5	4	3	2	1
8c"My parents/carers have inspired me to work hard so I can get the job that I want"	5	4	3	2	1
5g"My parents/carers respect my choices when it comes to college work"	5	4	3	2	1

Question FIVE: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate response for each statement:

Box B					
Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
7a"My parents/carers are not sure how well I will do at college"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
4b"I rely on my parents/carers to manage and help me with coursework"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
7e"I do not place great importance on my education"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
5e My parents/carers believe that I know more than them about how to get on with my work"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
7b"My parents/carers are unsure whether I will succeed in education"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
4c"My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have not asked them to"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
5d "I choose when and how to do my college work"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**

Question SIX: Circle whether you agree or disagree with the following statements and please include additional comments

a) ***"If I performed badly in a piece of coursework, my parents/carers would react by getting more involved with my work and may try to take control"***

Agree *Disagree*

I think this because……..

…….

b) ***"If I did really well in a piece of coursework, my parents/carers would be more likely to leave me to get on myself and trust me to do my work the way I want to"***

Agree *Disagree*

I think this because……..

…….

c) ***"My coursework grades would not change the type of involvement my parents/carers offer"***

Agree *Disagree*

I think this because……..

…….

Question SEVEN: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate response for each statement:

Box C					
Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
5f"My parents/carers trust me to do college work myself"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
4e"My parents/carers believe that they know more than me about how I should be doing my college work"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
5a"My parents/carers gently encourage me to complete my work for college"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
7c"My parents/carers do not have particular aspirations for what job I get"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**

4d"I sometimes feel pressurised by my parents/carers to do college work when I do not really want to"	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**

Question EIGHT: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate response for each statement:

Box D					
Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
4f"My parents/carers do not really trust me to get on with my work myself"	5	4	3	2	1
7d"My parents/carers do not think education is particularly important"	5	4	3	2	1
8d"My parents/carers think it is important to get a good education"	5	4	3	2	1
4g"My parents/carers make choices about my work"	5	4	3	2	1
8e"I value a good education"	5	4	3	2	1

Question NINE: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate response for each statement:

Box E					
Statement	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
"Formal Qualifications are of value to my parents" *(e.g. BTEC level 3)*	5	4	3	2	1
"My parents value BTEC level 3 more than traditional A levels"	5	4	3	2	1

Question TEN: Comment on the following statement:

"My parents/carers find it hard to support me due to the nature of the <u>subject</u> I am studying…"

Question ELEVEN: Tick the statement which is true for you:

In terms of your education and learning, have:

d) *Your parents/carers **reduced** the amount of involvement offered as you started college* ☐

e) *Your parents/carers offered the **same amount** of involvement as you started college* ☐

f) *Your parents/carers i**ncreased** the amount of involvement offered as you started college* ☐

Question TWLEVE: Comment on the following statement by writing in the box below:

"My parents/carers' involvement with my learning and education has changed since I was in primary school"

Question THIRTEEN: Please read the statements in the left hand column and tick the appropriate responses:

Box E					
Statement	**All the time**	**Most of the time**	**Sometimes**	**Not often**	**Never**
(13a) "I control ***how much*** *involvement my parents/carers have with my college work"*	5	4	3	2	1
(13b) "I control ***the type*** *of involvement my parents/carers have with my college work"*	5	4	3	2	1

Question FOURTEEN: Please rate how you feel about the following statement by ticking the appropriate box:

"Having my parents/carers more involved with my college work would make me attain a higher grade"

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Thank you for taking time to complete the questionnaire. Your help is very much appreciated ☺

Appendix K: Main interview questions

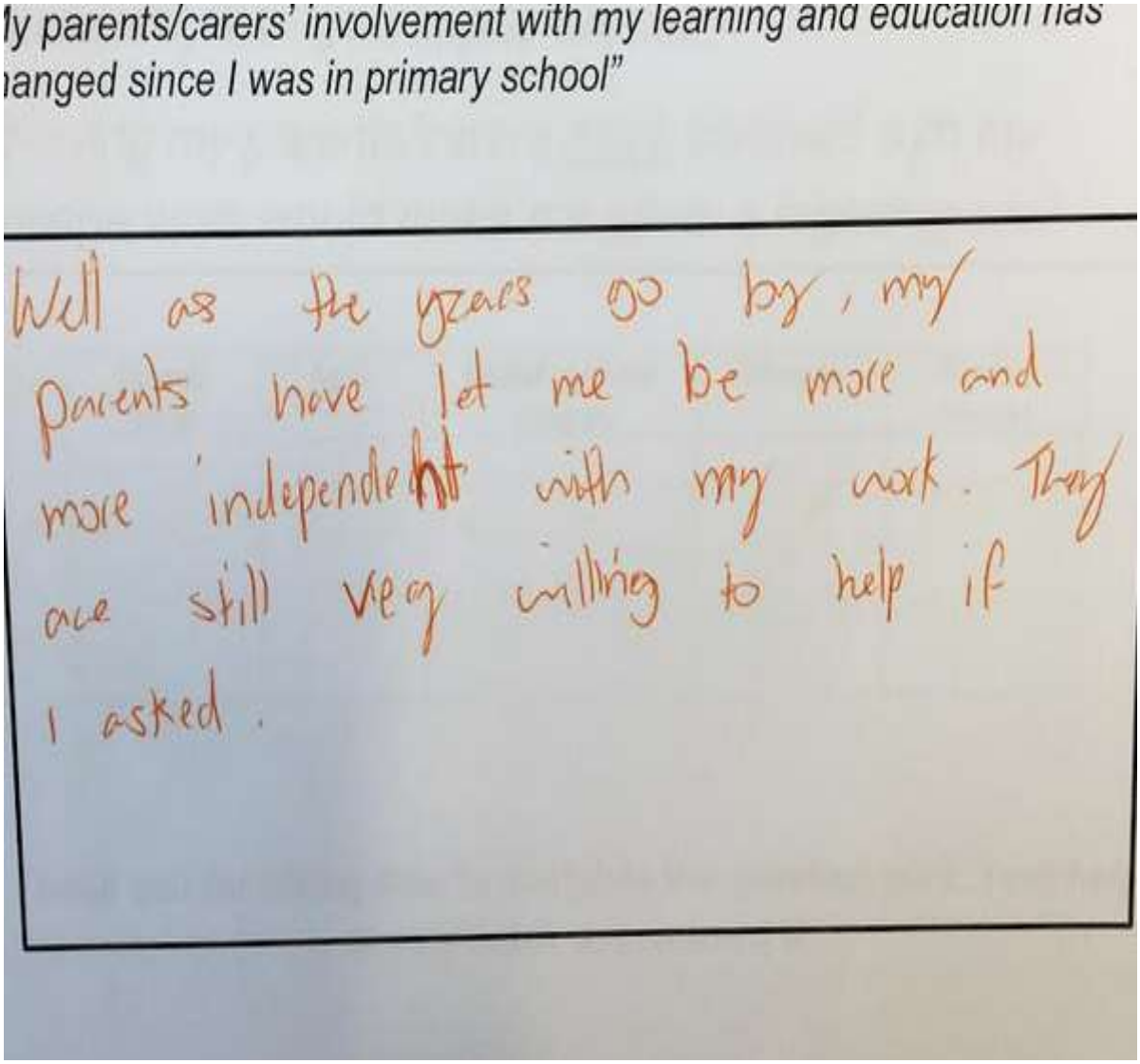
Main Interviews (additional questions/changes after the pilot study are added in red)

1) Refer to student's last answer on the questionnaire (**"having my parents/carers more involved would make me get better grades"**) and discuss this with the student and/or ask a few warm-up/starter questions
2) How would you describe your **relationship** with your parents/carers in terms of the support they give you with college?

Agree/strongly agree	Disagree/ strongly disagree
3) Why do you think **more** involvement would make you achieve higher grades?	3) Why do you **disagree** with this statement?
4) Do you wish your parents/carers were **MORE** involved than they are already?	4) Tell me about the ways your parents/carers **support** you with college
5) What do you think the 3 **most important** things are that your parent/carer can do to **support** you to get high grades?	5) Refer to qu. 12 ** Would YOU want your parents to be more involved?
6) Do your parents/carers view you **as independent** with your learning?	6) Would your parents **want** to be more involved or not? Why?
7) Tell me about the **support** they already give you	7) What **factors** (things about your life/situation) have made you develop your independence?
8) What would you **change** about their support?	8) * Do YOU control the support you get or do your PARENTS control how much/what types they are willing to give?
9) Do you think that your attitudes to your college education influences your parents' involvement?	
10) What else could they do to support you that they are **not already doing**?	
11) Who has the most influence in how *well* you do – Teachers, peers or parents? 12) What motivates you to aim for certain grades?	

13) Challenge question: In general, what is the **MOST** important thing a parent can do to support their child's learning at college to get **high grades**?	9) "My parents **have taught** me the skills to help me to **be independent**" *Please comment.* 10) What do you think the 3 **most important** things are that your parent/carer can do to support you to get high grades? 11) Who has the most influence in how *well* you do – Teachers, peers or parents? 12) What motivates you to aim for certain grades? 13) Challenge question: In general, what is the **MOST** important thing a parent/carer can do to support their child's learning at college to get **high grades**?

Appendix L: Excerpt of student responses



a) **"If I performed badly in a piece of coursework, my parents/carers would react by getting more involved with my work and may try to take control"**

Agree (Disagree)

I think this because... I do not talk to my mum about my work and I am always adamant that I will achieve the highest possible grade.

b) **"If I did really well in a piece of coursework, my parents/carers would be more likely to leave me to get on myself and trust me to do my work the way I want to"**

Agree (Disagree)

I think this because... (refer above)

c) **"My coursework grades would not change the type of involvement my parents/carers offer"**

(Agree) Disagree

I think this because... I never really talk to my parents about college work due to the fact I know they will not understand it.

...ments and please include additional comments ...you agree or disagree with the

a) **"If I performed badly in a piece of coursework, my parents/carers would react by getting more involved with my work and may try to take control"**

Agree (Disagree)

I think this because...they...would...never...try...and...take...control...just...guide...me...to...something...better...

b) **"If I did really well in a piece of coursework, my parents/carers would be more likely to leave me to get on myself and trust me to do my work the way I want to"**

(Agree) Disagree

I think this because...they...dont...get...involved...as...they...trust...me...ill...be...succeeding...

c) **"My coursework grades would not change the type of involvement my parents/carers offer"**

(Agree) Disagree

I think this because...I...have...done...everything...on...my...own...without...being...pushed...by...my...parents

react by getting more involved with my work and may try to take control"

Agree Disagree

I think this because....It depends whether I tell them... about it and if I do, they just tell me to fix

b) **"If I did really well in a piece of coursework, my parents/carers would be more likely to leave me to get on myself and trust me to do my work the way I want to"**

Agree Disagree

I think this because....They usually leave me to it anyway.....

c) **"My coursework grades would not change the type of involvement my parents/carers offer"**

Agree Disagree

I think this because....only because if I completely failed that's when they'd be involved.....

7

Question TEN: Comment on the following statement:

"My parents/carers find it hard to support me due to the nature of the subject I am studying..."

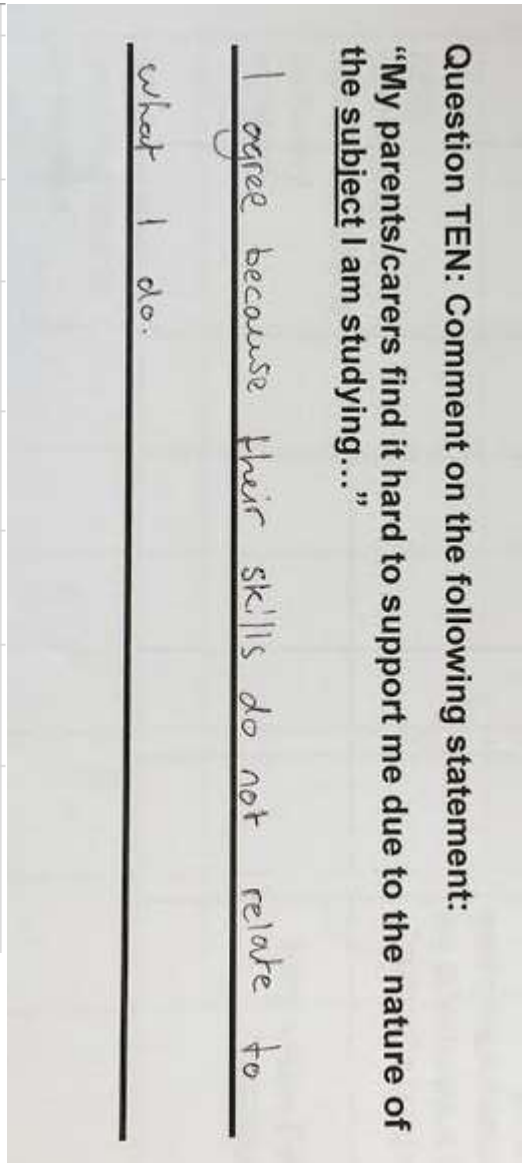
My mother doesnt understand technology all that well so she struggles to help me with certain work.

uestion TWLEVE: Comment on the following statement by writin the box below:

My parents/carers' involvement with my learning and education has hanged since I was in primary school"

They have always motivated me but they do not get over-involved unless I ask for their help/advice.

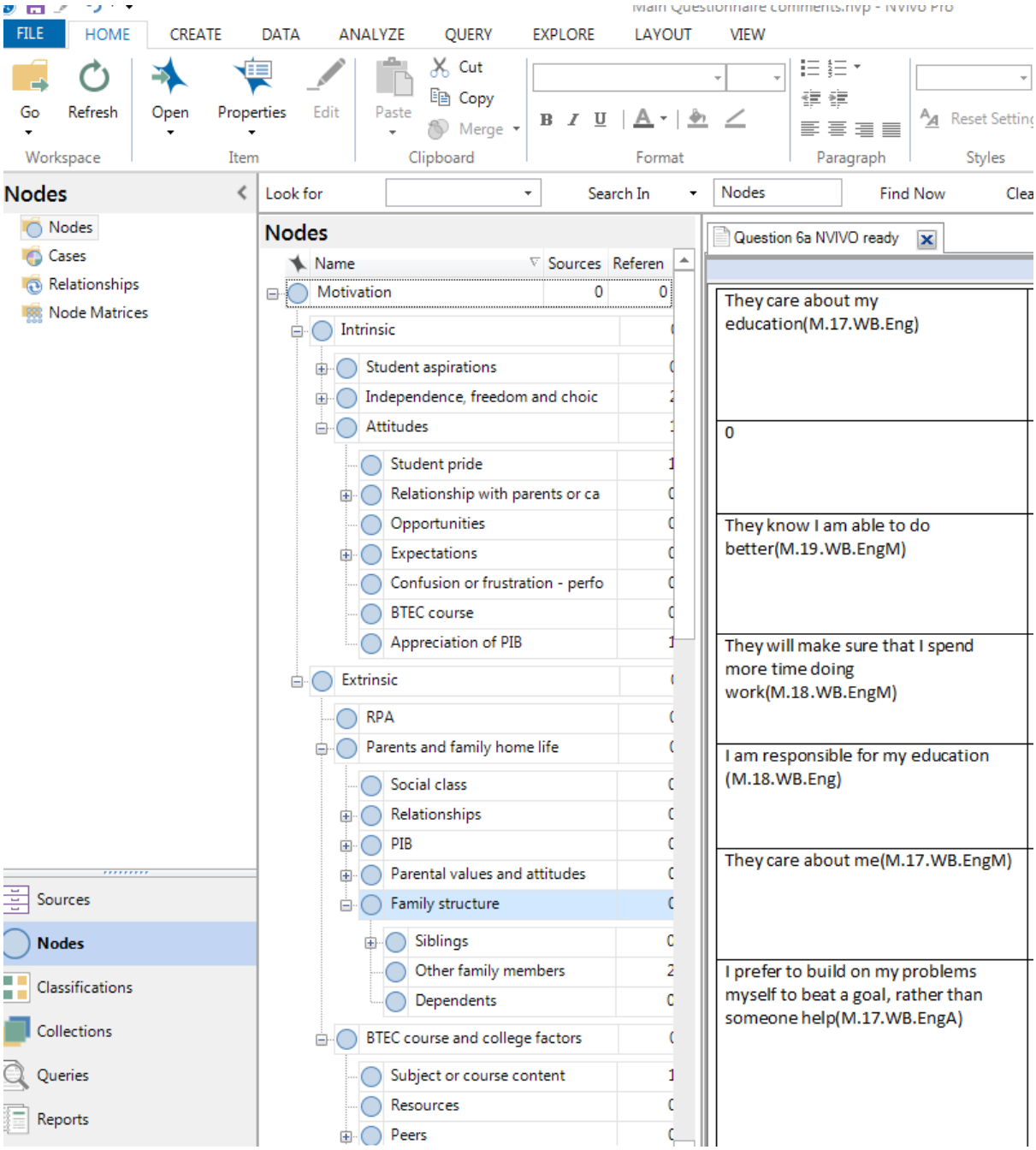
6a	6b	6c	10 - Find it hard to support me	12 - Involvement has changed since primary school
They care about my education(M.17.WB.Eng)	They trust me(M.17.WB.Eng)	They'll help even if they don't know anything about engineering(M.17.WB.Eng)	True but they research workshops for me and use their maths and english skills to help(M.17.WB.Eng)	True because I'm at the age that qualifications are more difficult and they support me with applications to jobs and apprenticeships and they help by supplying me with good resources(M.17.WB.Eng)
0	0	0	No(M.17.WP.Eng)	Yep. Since I came here with no knowledge of English they helped me learn(M.17.WP.Eng)
They know I am able to do better(M.19.WB.EngM)	It obviously working(M.19.WB.EngM)	They are important (grades)(M.19.WB.EngM)	Not really they try no matter what(M.19.WB.EngM)	Yes, has increased due to the greater importance of grades. Also my attitude is not the best and have under performed (M.19.WB.EngM)
They will make sure that I spend more time doing work(M.18.WB.EngM)	0	0	Yes, because they don't have much knowledge in engineering, however they will still try to help(M.18.WB.EngM)	The older I get, the less they will help, unless I really need it(M.18.WB.EngM)
I am responsible for my education (M.18.WB.Eng)	They would be happy, but they wouldn't change their involvement in my work (M.18.WB.Eng)	I am old enough to be responsible for my work (M.18.WB.Eng)	I agree because they don't know anything about engineering (M.18.WB.Eng)	As I've grown up they have become less involved, which I believe is the correct thing to do. This helps me be more independent and responsible for my work (M.18.WB.Eng)
They care about me(M.17.WB.EngM)	They trust me(M.17.WB.EngM)	They want to make sure I am working at my pace(M.17.WB.EngM)	Yes, they don't know anything about engineering(M.17.WB.EngM)	It has decreased because they want me to be more independent(M.17.WB.EngM)
I prefer to build on my problems myself to beat a goal, rather than someone help(M.17.WB.EngA)	It is at a good standard so can be left as is(M.17.WB.EngA)	My parent doesn't understand the subject enough to help. Therefore I must do well by myself(M.17.WB.EngA)	Yes because of the nature of this job compared to what they do(M.17.WB.EngA)	As my parents follow very different paths to engineering (business and arts) I could only get help from other members of my family(M.17.WB.EngA)

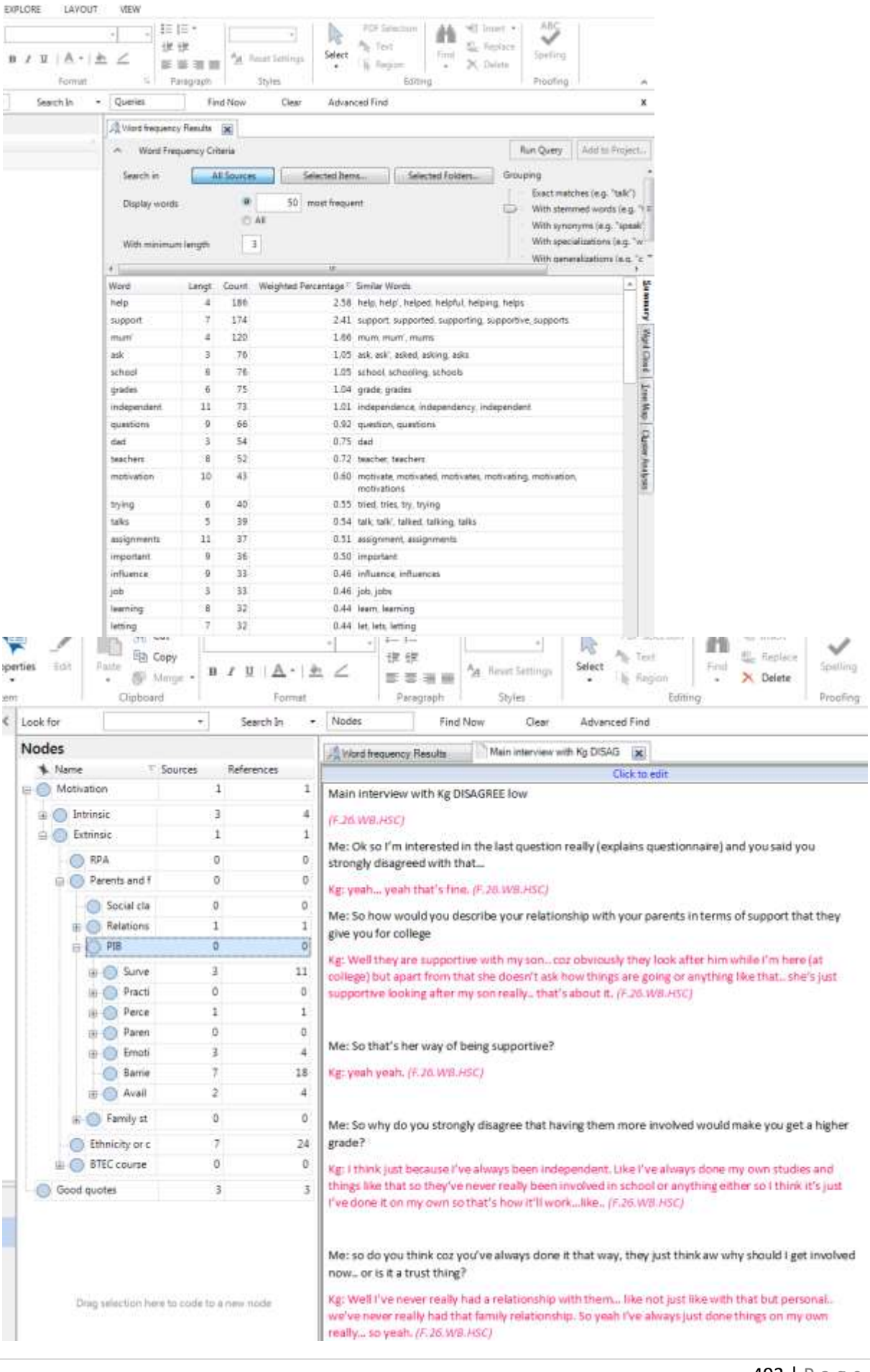


They let me get on with my resubmission. I haven't been in a situation where this has escalated further(M.17.WB.IT)	We already have the trust. They let me get on with the work and have no reason to be worried.(M.17.WB.IT)	I think they we care to find out what had happened and how to improve it.(M.17.WB.IT)	This is true. They are very limited in what they can help me with because they don't have the knowledge.(M.17.WB.IT)	As I have gotten older and study has become more independent, their input lessened. I think this is because they trusted me to study on my own and they didn't have a lot of knowledge in the more depth subjects.(M.17.WB.IT)
I don't know(F.17.BC.Dnc)	They trust me(F.17.BC.Dnc)	I don't know(F.17.BC.Dnc)	No they do not (find it hard) they still support me(F.17.BC.Dnc)	Yeah because I am older so they trust me more to deal with my education and always attend college.(F.17.BC.Dnc)
I am 18 years old and I make my own choices(F.18.WB.Dnc)	I am 18 years old and I make my own choices(F.18.WB.Dnc)	I am 18 years old and I make my own choices(F.18.WB.Dnc)	They don't find it hard(F.18.WB.Dnc)	True because they expect me to have more responsibility in my own work.(F.18.WB.Dnc)
They want me to do the best I can(F.18.WB.Dnc)	They know I can do it myself(F.18.WB.Dnc)	They don't know much about my course(F.18.WB.Dnc)	Kind of. But they trust me to do well and that they know I know what I want to do in the future(F.18.WB.Dnc)	Yes. They still help me if needed but they know it is important for me to learn it myself and have my own independence.(F.18.WB.Dnc)
My parents usually don't get involved with my coursework(M.19.WBC.IT)	I usually get left to do work on my own without prompting to do it(M.19.WBC.IT)	Involvement and assistance varies depending on how well I perform(M.19.WBC.IT)	Yes as they don't have advanced knowledge into computing, coding and networking(M.19.WBC.IT)	Yes. They have become more supportive when I've been struggling with particular subjects(M.19.WBC.IT)
They believe I should be able to rectify the issue(M.20.WB.IT)	I am mostly independent when working at home on college work(M.20.WB.IT)	They do not understand much of the contents of my college work(M.20.WB.IT)	Due to the technical aspect of my chosen subject is difficult to understand(M.20.WB.IT)	Compared to my primary school years my parents have left me to be more independent about my work, mainly because of my age and because of the technical aspect of my college work they find

They guide me not 'take control'(M.18.WB.IT)	They leave me to my own devices to continue on that path(M.18.WB.IT)	They guide me just as much either way(M.18.WB.IT)	0	Yes - As this is my last year they prompt me to get the higher grades and think of my future(M.18.WB.IT)
They don't know about IT(M.19.WB.IT)	Don't know why but wouldn't happen(M.19.WB.IT)	0	Completely true. They don't have IT experience so can't offer input(M.19.WB.IT)	While I was in lower and middle school my parents helped me with maths and english etc. And during my GCSEs they encouraged me to revise for my exams but since I've started sixth form they have asked about my work but have not helped me with it at all as IT is something they have no knowledge or interest in(M.19.WB.IT)
They want me to do well in the future or when retaking(M.18.ABI.IT)	They believe I can do it myself(M.18.ABI.IT)	They are not very intellectual with computers and software(M.18.ABI.IT)	This is true as my mum is not great with computers and the complex side, therefore she trusts me to do well on my own. Whereas my Dad has some experience and he can help me(M.18.ABI.IT)	I didn't do so well in my A-levels, therefore the involvement in my learning has changed from that stage. However it has only changed slightly since primary school.(M.18.ABI.IT)
They know nothing about IT so they would be unable to help(M.17.WB.IT)	So far this year I am on the road for full marks and they know this so they trust me(M.17.WB.IT)	My parents don't get involved with my work unless I ask them for help(M.17.WB.IT)	This is probably the subject that both of my parents know the least about(M.17.WB.IT)	In primary school there were multiple subjects that they could help me with that were very easy and I often asked for help(M.17.WB.IT)
They feel they can input their knowledge to help me(M.18.WB.IT)	They trust me(M.18.WB.IT)	If they see my grades dropping they want to help me more(M.18.WB.IT)	Yes because they have a limited knowledge in IT(M.18.WB.IT)	They have offered the same support possible since primary school(M.18.WB.IT)
They care(M.17.WB.IT)	They would still give me the same support(M.17.WB.IT)	0	0	0

Excerpt of NVIVO coding




EXPLORE
LAYOUT
VIEW
Search In
Queries
Find Now
Clear
Advanced Find
Word frequency Results
Word Frequency Criteria
Run Query
Add to Project...
Search in
All Sources
Selected Items...
Selected Folders...
Grouping
Display words
50
most frequent
All
With minimum length
3
Exact matches (e.g. "talk")
With stemmed words (e.g. "
With synonyms (e.g. "speak"
With specializations (e.g. "w
With generalizations (e.g. "c
Word | Length | Count | Weighted Percentage | Similar Words
help | 4 | 186 | 2.58 | help, help', helped, helpful, helping, helps
support | 7 | 174 | 2.41 | support, supported, supporting, supportive, supports
mum | 4 | 120 | 1.66 | mum, mum', mums
ask | 3 | 76 | 1.05 | ask, ask', asked, asking, asks
school | 6 | 76 | 1.05 | school, schooling, schools
grades | 6 | 75 | 1.04 | grade, grades
independent | 11 | 73 | 1.01 | independence, independency, independent
questions | 9 | 66 | 0.92 | question, questions
dad | 3 | 54 | 0.75 | dad
teachers | 8 | 52 | 0.72 | teacher, teachers
motivation | 10 | 43 | 0.60 | motivate, motivated, motivates, motivating, motivation, motivations
trying | 6 | 40 | 0.55 | tried, tries, try, trying
talks | 5 | 39 | 0.54 | talk, talk', talked, talking, talks
assignments | 11 | 37 | 0.51 | assignment, assignments
important | 9 | 36 | 0.50 | important
influence | 9 | 33 | 0.46 | influence, influences
job | 3 | 33 | 0.46 | job, jobs
learning | 8 | 32 | 0.44 | learn, learning
letting | 7 | 32 | 0.44 | let, lets, letting
Copy
Clipboard
Format
Paragraph
Styles
Select
Editing
Delete
Proofing
Look for
Search In
Nodes
Find Now
Clear
Advanced Find
Nodes
Name | Sources | References
Motivation | 1 | 1
Intrinsic | 3 | 4
Extrinsic | 1 | 1
RPA | 0 | 0
Parents and f | 0 | 0
Social cla | 0 | 0
Relations | 1 | 1
PIB | 0 | 0
Surve | 3 | 11
Practi | 0 | 0
Perce | 1 | 1
Paren | 0 | 0
Emoti | 3 | 4
Barrie | 7 | 18
Avail | 2 | 4
Family st | 0 | 0
Ethnicity or c | 7 | 24
BTEC course | 0 | 0
Good quotes | 3 | 3
Drag selection here to code to a new node
Word frequency Results
Main interview with Kg DISAG
Click to edit
Main interview with Kg DISAGREE low
(F.26.WB.HSC)
Me: Ok so I'm interested in the last question really (explains questionnaire) and you said you strongly disagreed with that...
Kg: yeah... yeah that's fine. (F.26.WB.HSC)
Me: So how would you describe your relationship with your parents in terms of support that they give you for college
Kg: Well they are supportive with my son... coz obviously they look after him while I'm here (at college) but apart from that she doesn't ask how things are going or anything like that.. she's just supportive looking after my son really.. that's about it. (F.26.WB.HSC)
Me: So that's her way of being supportive?
Kg: yeah yeah. (F.26.WB.HSC)
Me: So why do you strongly disagree that having them more involved would make you get a higher grade?
Kg: I think just because I've always been independent. Like I've always done my own studies and things like that so they've never really been involved in school or anything either so I think it's just I've done it on my own so that's how it'll work...like.. (F.26.WB.HSC)
Me: so do you think coz you've always done it that way, they just think aw why should I get involved now.. or is it a trust thing?
Kg: Well I've never really had a relationship with them... like not just like with that but personal.. we've never really had that family relationship. So yeah I've always just done things on my own really... so yeah. (F.26.WB.HSC)

Excerpt of Focus Group Discussion

I value a good education. It's important. You can't really do much if you don't have a good education. You need it to get a job or to come to college. Need to further it. I think it's just me. I don't think my parents value it as much as I do. Coz loads of my cousins are doctors or nurses and i was like i wanna do music and they were like no. So they don't like it(G8, f, main, music and drama)
Mine were mixed. My parents think it's important to get a good education and they gently encourage me to do my work. In terms of it being important to get education. I, my dad is a policeman and my mum had less of an education. She. erm, what did she do..? They were two complete opposites in terms of workwise. My dad left school at 16 to become a policeman. He knew he didn't need really good grades but he needed them to fall back on if he didn't want to do policing anymore.so he took everything very seriously and he knew what job he wanted to go into so its a little bit different whereas my mum didnt know so she got a good enough education to go into a well paid job. So, for me, they want me to do what i want to do but at the same time i need grades to fall back on. does that make sense? so say i wanted to become a musician. It would be great to pursue that but in order for me to feel free and be able to do that i want to go to university to do something completely different. So they respect that. they respect what i want to get into but they keep in the back of my mind you need to keep your good education because it's a good fall-back. like I don't want to be a teacher necessarily but going to university, getting a degree, that's a very good way to keep my options open so they do reinforce that and they encourage me to do my work so that i get the good grades. They did pressure me. originally. but then i was like this isn't working. I'm not going to do my work if you pressure me. it was more of an argument. It wasn't really civil. I was like chill out. I was like you need to chill out on me otherwise I'm not gonna do it. When someone tells me i can't do something the way i wanna do it i get annoyed. Like i was told last year that i had to go from a triple down to a double in one of the courses i was doing coz i didn't have the time and i was putting too much pressure on myself and all this and i was like you're telling me I can't do something and then the following week i did everything I needed to do and i got A stars in it so when someone tells me i can't do something it makes me angry and i'm like ok well look at me now. and gives me drive. So they support me in that sense. they know i have the capability to do it and sometimes i lose myself, i sometimes lose my motivation and they keep it there. they reinforce it for me. It's good to have that kind of foundation. they may say you're not very good at this to make me do it more. it's working whatever they're doing. They're doing a good job, so...(G8, f, main, music and drama)

They expect me to do what I want so that I can be happy. They want me to enjoy my work. (G7, f, main, Hairdressing)
I think I'm leading my path because it's my choices, not my parents. They let me do what I want. I think if it's for me, I'm more likely to do better, like pass the course and have the drive to do it (G7, f, main, Hairdressing)
Yeah I think you need to want it, you need to want to come to college. If it was just my parents then I wouldn't come in, so I wouldn't pass. (G7, f, main, Hairdressing)
I don't think money matters really I think that I would still pass, like I have a job and I don't take any money from my parents. I'm independent already (G7, f, main, Hairdressing)
Money doesn't affect your grades I don't think. You might have someone who is really rich but if they don't come in then they won't understand the work. You have to be here and work hard. So yeah... (G7, f, main, Hairdressing)

well sort of Constant questions of care like the assignments hows college just basic questions (G5, m, main, sports)
They did (talk to me about careers) at the start of the year but its died down a bit coz I'm working towards something (G5, m, main, sports)
If I struggle my parents will try and guide me with my college work. If they know something about it they'll say. If not, they'll help me research to find the right information. Especially they get very stressed when it's the last bit I need to do and I've lost a bit of paper or something (G5, m, main, sports)
My parents think it's important to get a good education. They tell me regularly to get a good education, to get a good career so I can be set for life really, just work hard and get my career (G5, m, main, sports)
My parents don't have particular aspirations for which job I get so like I said my mum doesn't see any future behind sports, but she trusts in me doing my coursework and she leaves that stuff to me she's not sure what's going to happen next yeah she trusts me (G5, m, main, sports)
My parents inspired me to work hard so I can get the job I want. They talk to me about it pretty much every day. They ask if I enjoy it, and if I enjoy it then I work harder, get better grades and get the job and get a job that I enjoy (G5, m, main, sports)

They don't really ask me about college. (G4, f, main, public services)
Yeah (they value it). They convinced me to come to college. I wasn't really gonna come but they said it's probably a good idea so I said fair enough. I was just gonna go and get a job. (G4, m, main, public services)
Yeah (they value it) because they don't complain (G4, f, main, public services)
I'm not sure (if they value it). It's kind of something for me to do while I wait to join the forces so I guess they know the fact its something related. It gets knowledge so I've learnt stuff about the fire service and police and that so ive got a better knowledge overall of the services in case i wanted to change my mind and do something else. so i guess they kind of value what we learn in it but they dont say much. it's not one (a qualification) i need so i dont think they are really bothered. (G4, m, main, public services)
Don't know. I think so (they value it) my parents both are happy that I'm doing this course and stuff but i dont know. They don't really speak about it they just say like if I talk about what I got last year like my distinction and stuf like that they are really proud of me and they say like oh im proud and they are always asking me what I am going to do after the course. I think they are quite excited to see where I go next (G4, f, main, public services)
I choose when and how I do my college work because I work better at home and yeah (I decide when to do my work). I wouldn't tell them (if I was procrastinating) I would rely on people at college to help me (G4, f, main, public services)
I choose when and how to do my college work. Yeah basically my parents just don't have anything to do with it coz they know im handling it. I'm old enough now to do it all myself. I just get on with it. If

No (they wouldn't change their style). If someone needed a grade for going to university or something then you would expect the parent to have a go at them and tell them if they don't do this then they wont get to the next stage. (G4, m, main, public services)
I think with the actual work, I can do it myself. But still need your parents to, I dunno how to say it, to encourage you to do well even if they cant help you with the actual work itself (G6, F, main, travel)
my mum does try and help but I'm like you weren't in the lesson you don't know what, she'll be like can I help you but you can't coz she weren't in the lesson but she will always say to me like every day after I get home oh how was college? Have you got any work to do tonight? so yeah she does try to get involved but sometimes she can't coz she don't know what we're doing coz she weren't in the lesson was she? Yeah (supportive role)(G6, F, main, travel)
Yeah I would need my Mum and Dad's support to make me do my work (laughs) but when I'm doing my work yeah, I don't need their help. I can do it myself coz I was in the lesson as well(G6, F, main, travel)
My mum has asked me what I'm doing and stuff but it's really difficult to explain when she's not there so you're just kind of stuck.(G6, F, main, travel)
So they ask me what I did in lesson, and I explain to them, even if my mum doesn't understand it she's still like ok, you should go and do your work. My dad the same thing (Pushing in the right direction) Yeah.(G6, F, main, travel)
My parents carers talk to me about my college work rather than getting involved with the essay writing itself. Um, they check that I'm ok but like we said at the start, they don't really know what's going on, the actual work but they are supportive of it (G6, F, main, travel)
My parents/carers respect my choices when it comes to college work. They're just not pushy but they know that, it's a bit like this one, they will trust me to do it and they know what it's what I want to do(G6, F, main, travel)
My parents carers have inspired me to work hard so I can get the job I want , erm, they both really love their jobs and I want to be happy in my job like they are happy in their jobs.(G6, F, main, travel)

Excerpt of Interviews

Me: So tell me about the ways they do support you…

Tm: Erm… if I was struggling then they'd obviously…. I know I could go back and ask them if I need anything.. but when I was little they did a lot for me but when I got a job I just supported myself.. so erm they don't really … like sometimes they'll give me a little bit of pocket money but that's just like… *(F.20.ABB.TT)*

Me: Just to keep you going?

Tm: Yeah I don't really need it (the pocket money) but yeah, like I feel independent after getting a job and running my own car and I don't really rely on them for all that kind of stuff. I help them instead. I contribute to house bills and to shopping… *(F.20.ABB.TT)*

Me: oh is it the other way round…?

Tm: erm, It works both ways like obviously there's 4 of us siblings and my mother doesn't work. She's a house wife and my Dad can't provide everything so that's why I try to help as well and now that I can, it just makes more sense to *(F.20.ABB.TT)*

Me: Do they ask you about what you've been doing or show interest in your work?

Tm: Erm sometimes but most of the time it's like, before I go, oh are you going, what are you going to do today just stuff like that but not like anything to do with my course or anything. I think in their head it's just like 'she's going to college' and that's it. They don't really know anything about my course.. they just know what I've told them.. like that…well before I started this course I wanted to do cabin crew so they just thought oh after I've passed this course that's what she'll want to do just airport work and that's just how they thought of it.. *(F.20.ABB.TT)*

Me: Ok and how would you describe your relationship with your mum in terms of how she supports you with college?

Ka: Well my mum since I've been little has always supported me in education. So if ever I needed help I'd ask her for it but I don't really ask her for help in IT. So when it comes to IT I just do things by myself really. *(M.20.WB.IT)*

There's very few times I'd ask my mum for help with anything maybe if I'm writing a cv maybe I'd ask her for some opinions.. but with my education as it is I don't need to ask for help to be honest *(M.20.WB.IT)*

Me: Why do you think that is?

Ka: My mum's not very IT literate.. *(M.20.WB.IT)*

Me: So it's to do with the specialism of the subject?

Ka: Yeah yeah.. *(M.20.WB.IT)*

Me: So why do you strongly disagree with the statement that more help would make you get higher grades?

Ka: because even if my mum was say an IT specialist or whatever and she was helping me with my work I don't feel that I would need that help to actually do things.. I mean I'm driven to get what I need and what I want.. *(M.20.WB.IT)*

I depend on my mum for loads of other things but when it comes to getting my own things I don't depend on my mum So if I want to go to university – which is what I want to do – I know what grades I have to get and I put that on myself to get those grades.. *(M.20.WB.IT)*

Me: Ok. Tell me about the ways your mum does support you with college.

Ka: Well a roof over my head being the main one.. *(M.20.WB.IT)*

Kn: Erm.. I'm never really been supported by my parents when it comes to school work so I'm used to them not being involved *(F.18.WO.HSC)*

and I remember one time my Mum was like trying to help me out with homework and getting me to do stuff and that kinda put me off... and it caused me to rebel and I was like no I'm not gonna do all the work anymore so I'm kinda working in a way like if my mum doesn't tell me to do it, I'll do it... and if she does I won't do it so it's like (laughs) the opposite effect!! *(F.18.WO.HSC)*

Me: So has she seen that work? Does she understand that now or do you still have to remind her?

Kn: No she understands that now. *(F.18.WO.HSC)*

Me: That's interesting though so you're very independent and you're saying 'no!'

Kn: (Laughs and nods) *(F.18.WO.HSC)*

Me: Erm.. tell me about the other ways they support you in terms of.. I mean do they support you financially? You've got a roof over your head..? They feed you?

Kn: Erm, well they support me like if I had some kind of aspiration for the future... they won't tell me no you can't do that... they'd be doing everything they could do to help me do that in the future.. so like when I chose what I want to do at uni they weren't saying no you can't do that you're gonna do what we chose.. they were like yeah do it.. it's what's going to make you happy. So... that's how they support me...other ways I think.. I can't think of anything else... *(F.18.WO.HSC)*

Me: How would you describe the relationship in terms of the support they give you?

Je: It's fine. For now. I've kinda turned 18 now kind of like slowly pushing them away*(M.18.WB.Cons)*

Me: are they pushing them away or are they pushing you away?

Je: Yeah I'm all of that (pushing them away) yeah yeah.. but it's alright.. it's not bad*(M.18.WB.Cons)*

Me: So why do you disagree that having them more involved would make you get higher grades?

Je: Coz I feel like I'd concentrate on that more if I was doing it on my own and I'd be more in the zone to do it on my own rather than having them next to me helping me to do it.. *(M.18.WB.Cons)*

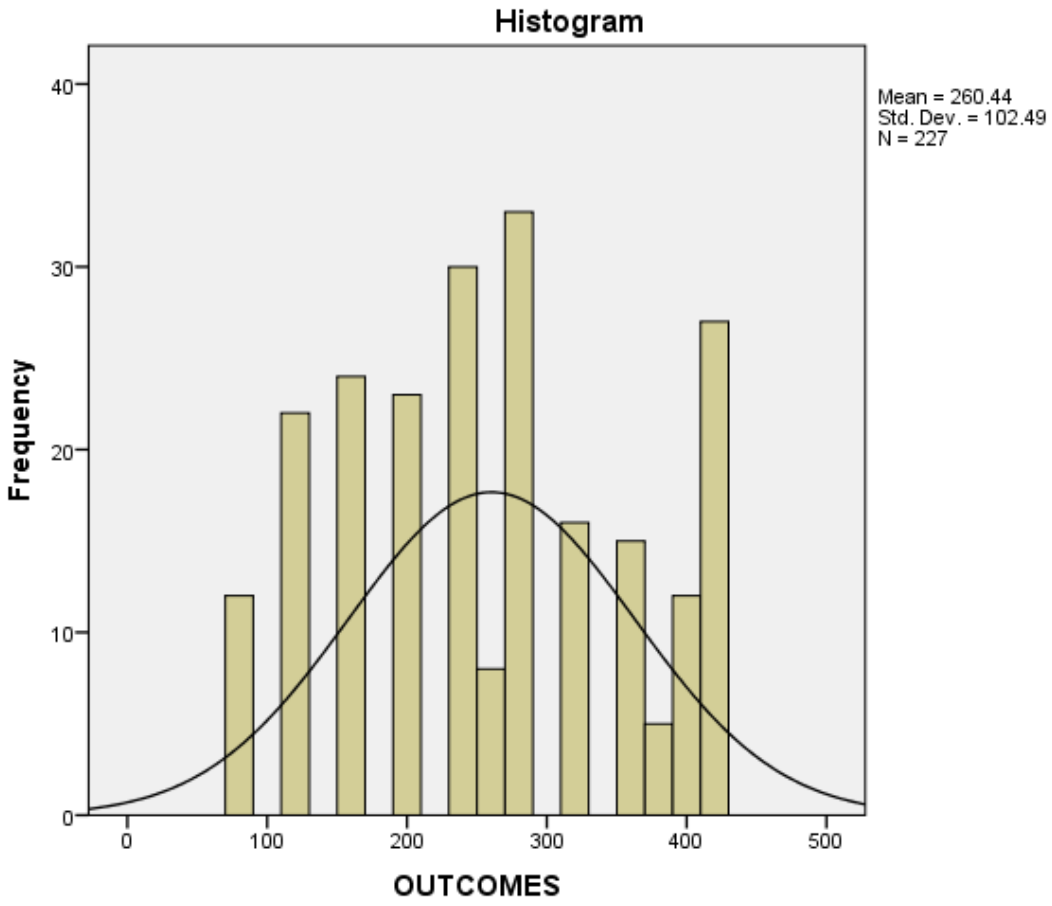
Me: ok. So it's kind of you being motivated to work by yourself?

Je: yeah yeah yeah because they wouldn't really understand what I'm doing. If it was school they would but it's college so they don't really understand do they? So.....*(M.18.WB.Cons)*

Appendix M: An argument for non-parametric tests with the data set

The data therefore shows that the Shapiro-Wilk test p value was below 0.05 at 0.000, indicating that the data may not be normally distributed. The Kurtosis value, too, was also higher than usual for a normal distribution: z = -1.031/ 0.322 = 3.2. However, the skewness value of the UCAS data was deemed normal where z = 0.034 / 0.162 = 0.21. Field (2013) identifies that for a large sample of 200 or more, significant values are presented even though the actual deviations from normality may be small. He suggests that the visual shape of the Q-Q plot, box plot and Histogram are deemed to be more important in determining normal distribution than focusing on the significance values of skewness and kurtosis. So, for a sample size of 240, the visual appearance of data may be better used in understanding whether UCAS data is normally distributed.

Histogram 1: UCAS data:



The Histogram appears to loosely follow the bell curve but there are a number of concerns in relation to normal distribution. For the very top scores of 400 and 420, a second peak appears to form. Reasons for this are explored in the discussion section and are reflected in the Kurtosis value (above). The Histogram also shows a small group of students who attained 260 UCAS points. This group is relatively small because in the structure of BTEC scores and UCAS points, the extended diploma students are not able to achieve this score; it is only attainable for the level 3 diploma students whose numbers were small (highlighted in red in the table below).

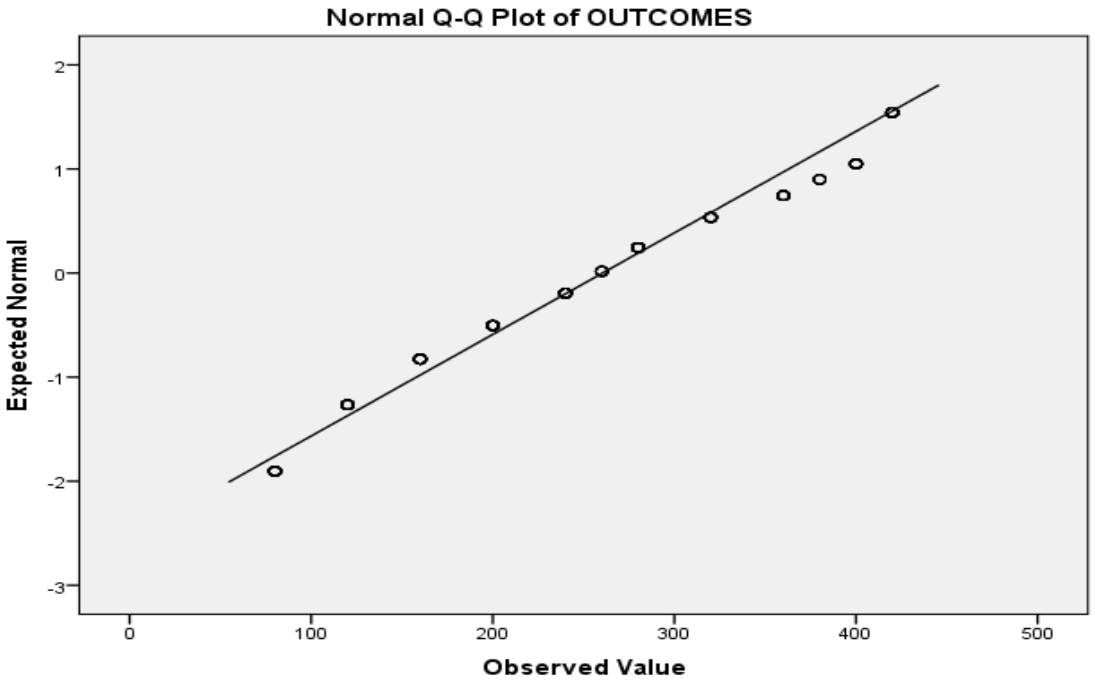
Conversion tariff for BTEC level 3 and UCAS points

UCAS TARIFF POINTS	BTEC LEVEL 3 QUALIFICATIONS (QCF)				
	BTEC LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA	BTEC LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA	BTEC LEVEL 3 90-CREDIT DIPLOMA	BTEC LEVEL 3 SUBSIDIARY DIPLOMA	BTEC LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE
420	D*D*D*				
400	D*D*D				
380	D*DD				
360	DDD				
320	DDM				
280	DMM	D*D*			
260		D*D			
240	MMM	DD			
210			D*D*		
200	MMP	DM	D*D		
180			DD		
160	MPP	MM	DM		
140				D*	
120	PPP	MP	MM	D	
100			MP		
80		PP		M	
70					D*
60			PP		D
50					
40				P	M

30					
20					P

As can be seen from the Q-Q plot below, data is following the line of normal distribution, (despite the top score being unusually high in the histogram):

Figure 1: Normal Q-Q plot for UCAS data:



The mean value of 260 UCAS points is equivalent to grade BBB for three A-levels, which reflects a normal distribution. The median (middle value when all the values are lined up) is also 260 UCAS points, again indicating a normal distribution. The mode (result that most students attained), is just slightly higher at 280. Approximate normal distribution is evident from these particular calculations.

Although the visual Q-Q plot, box plot and mean, median and mode appear to signal normal distribution, there are still problems identified with the UCAS data. The small group of students at 260 UCAS points who did not study the full extended diploma produce a low

UCAS points' score value in the middle of the Histogram which disrupts the usual bell curve. Additionally, there appears to be a second peak forming for the very highest level of UCAS points (400 and 420) which is problematic in terms of using this data in parametric tests.

Additionally, it is important to state that the statistical tests above (Skewness, Kurtosis and Shapiro-Wilk) are usually used on a continuous data set. UCAS data collected from the participants is not formed from a continuous data set (due to the way in which UCAS points are structured to associate with A. levels and BTEC equivalents) and this is likely to be reflected in the statistical test values which suggest a non-normal distribution. UCAS data is therefore ordinal, not continuous.

There is much debate as to whether Likert-scale type data, non-continuous data and non-normally distributed data can be used using parametric measures (Field, 2013). Therefore, non-parametric tests were used during the analysis process.

Appendix N: Outcomes for gender and course across the college and nationally

The tables below show the differences in average grades for gender and course. These factors have been chosen since the current study noted that there was a significant difference between grades for gender and course specifically.

Please see the Male/female split for point scores on Extended diplomas in 15/16 below.

Gender	Points Ave.
F	229.2
M	214.6

Please see the results by course below.

Course Title	Enrolments	Points Ave.
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 BTEC EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS (QCF)	13	221.2
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 BTEC EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING (QCF)	13	179.6
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 BTEC EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN MUSIC TECHNOLOGY (QCF)	10	199.0
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 BTEC EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN PERFORMING ARTS (QCF)	24	187.9
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 BTEC EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN SPORT (QCF)	26	214.0
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 BTEC LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN MUSIC (QCF)	10	199.0
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERING (QCF)	8	191.3
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN AGRICULTURE (QCF)	19	230.3
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN ANIMAL MANAGEMENT (QCF)	63	235.5
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT (QCF)	7	254.3
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN CREATIVE MEDIA PRODUCTION (QCF)	25	186.6
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN ELECTRICAL/ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING (QCF)	14	213.6
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN FISH MANAGEMENT (QCF)	7	192.1
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE (QCF)	31	236.3
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN HORSE MANAGEMENT (QCF)	4	227.5
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN HORTICULTURE (QCF)	9	207.2
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN IT (QCF)	18	222.2
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN PRODUCTION ARTS (QCF)	18	200.6
EDEXCEL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC SERVICES (QCF)	6	215.0
OCR CAMBRIDGE TECHNCIAL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN SPORT 05418	7	217.9
OCR CAMBRIDGE TECHNICAL LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS 05338	17	270.0
OCR LEVEL 3 CAMBRIDGE TECHNICAL EXTENDED DIPLOMA IN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE 05318	13	223.5

National outcomes for gender and course

Number of students completing their 16-18 study in 2015/16, who studied a level 3 BTEC course[1], a

Years: 2015/16[3]

Coverage: England

Split by gender

Gender	Total points[2]	Size of entries[2]	Average points[2]	Cohort[4]
Female	5,637,949.3	158,384.5	35.6	85,546
Male	5,815,427.8	183,175.8	31.7	99,108

Split by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Total points[2]	Size of entries[2]	Average points[2]	Cohort[4]
Asian	1,175,922.4	32,994.3	35.6	18,432
Black	756,678.5	23,858.8	31.7	12,457
Chinese	32,150.0	840.0	38.3	485
Mixed	418,614.4	12,928.8	32.4	7,015
Other	171,471.7	5,151.5	33.3	2,730
White	8,261,965.6	246,995.3	33.4	133,679
Unknown[5]	636574.43	18,791.8	33.9	9,856.0

Split by subject

Subject	Total points[2]	Size of entries[2]	Average points[2]	Cohort[4]
Business Studies	1,544,947.5	42,662.5	36.2	25,380
Small Business	26,936.3	841.0	32.0	561
Finance	24,697.5	609.0	40.6	698
Retailing	157.5	5.3	30.0	7

Computer Use	1,254,025.1	36,450.3	34.4	21,308
Law/Legal Studies	147,210.0	3,590.0	41.0	4,170
Art & Design	564,445.0	19,094.0	29.6	9,843
Fine Art	10,060.0	307.5	32.7	159
Graphic Design	80,872.5	2,627.5	30.8	1,089
3D Design	23,352.5	711.5	32.8	340
Fashion Design	69,075.0	2,053.5	33.6	913
Multimedia	606,627.5	21,282.5	28.5	10,484
Photography	74,355.0	2,453.0	30.3	1,184
Interactive Video	18,700.0	635.5	29.4	243
Dance: General	127,792.5	3,323.0	38.5	1,959
Performing Arts	386,352.5	11,563.5	33.4	6,050
Acting Skills	142,875.0	3,849.5	37.1	2,182
Music Theatre	105,160.0	2,793.0	37.7	1,306
Stage Management	26,297.5	863.5	30.5	709
Music Studies	266,108.8	8,577.0	31.0	4,982
Music Technology	91,820.0	3,247.0	28.3	1,174
Sports Studies	1,535,077.5	47,338.0	32.4	24,044
Sports Science	318,752.5	8,988.0	35.5	4,134
Sport Organisation	697.5	23.3	30.0	31
Hospitality Studies	17,295.0	570.0	30.3	190
Travel & Tourism	310,595.0	9,865.0	31.5	6,081
Health Studies	1,580,067.5	42,960.0	36.8	20,474
Childcare Skills	130,142.5	4,619.0	28.2	1,741
Sustainable Devel	3,687.5	103.0	35.8	130
Environmental Work	13,577.5	448.0	30.3	195
Applied Sciences	861,558.8	24,996.0	34.5	16,207
Agriculture	33,987.5	1,070.5	31.7	432
Horticulture	3,090.0	119.5	25.9	62

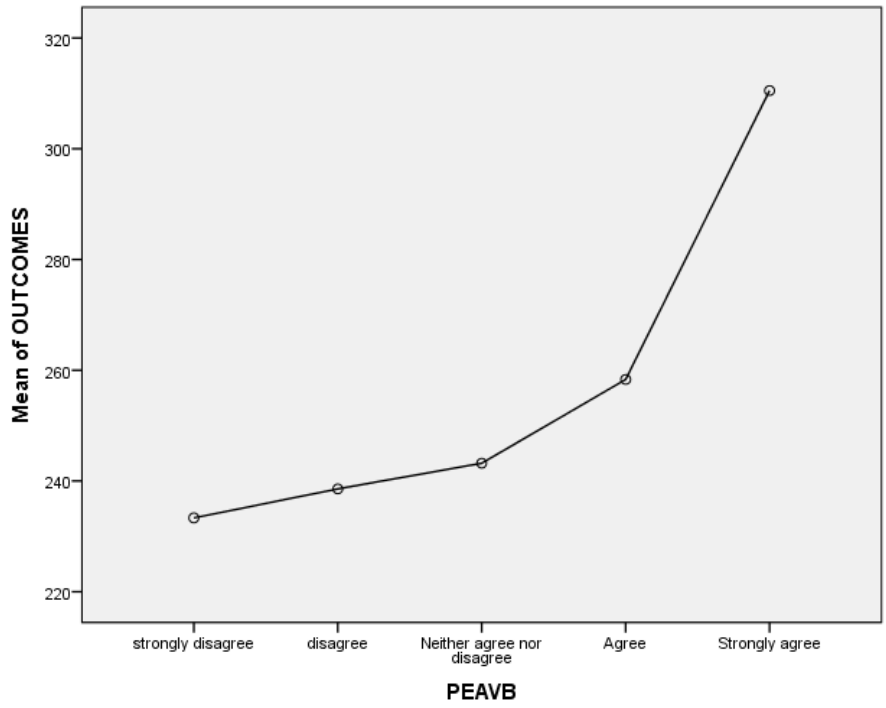
Floristry	2,540.0	60.0	42.3	34
Arboriculture	1,950.0	77.0	25.3	41
Animal Husbandry	210,826.3	5,954.0	35.4	2,601
Horse Care	37,748.8	1,135.0	33.3	470
Fish Farming	4,490.0	138.0	32.5	60
Farm Machinery	7,237.5	277.5	26.1	120
Farriery	415.0	14.0	29.6	12
Construction Tech	69,930.0	2,380.0	29.4	898
Building	27,573.8	1,006.0	27.4	861
Maintenance Eng	10,810.0	388.0	27.9	173
Manufacturing Eng	36,445.0	1,169.0	31.2	470
Engineering Studies	478,785.0	14,953.0	32.0	8,283
Mechanical eng	37,480.0	1,198.0	31.3	483
Electronic Eng	66,955.0	2,192.0	30.5	832
Aerospace Eng	25,235.0	760.0	33.2	272
Automotive Eng	17,875.0	632.0	28.3	294
Vehicle Servicing	180.0	6.0	30.0	6
Airport Management	16,504.4	581.0	28.4	282

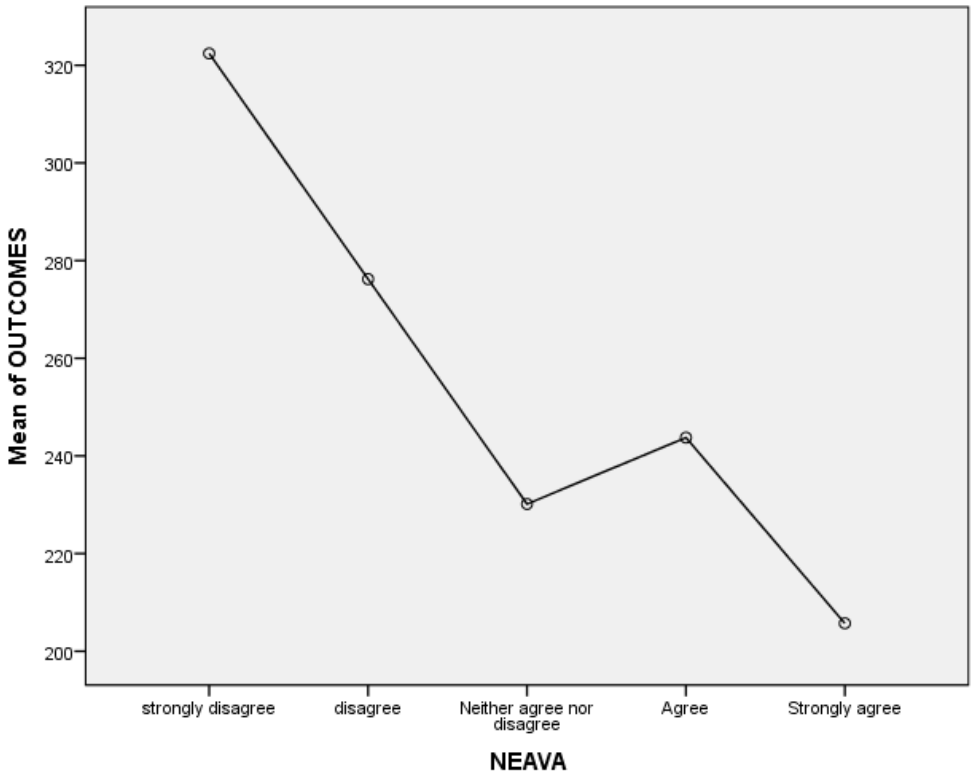
1. Discounting has been applied, in line with performance table methodology, see: https://www.govsubject' figures list all the subjects included in the gender and ethnicity splits.
2. Points are allocated to each of a student's 16-18 exam results using a scoring system, more informhttps://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/599866/SFR05_20
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671984/16-18_Ac
calculation of average points is based on the total points achieved by students and the total size of a
3. Figures are based on final data.

Appendix O: The relationships between student responses and attainment (RQ2)

Visual Relationships between responses and attainment that produced a significant value for RQ2

Expectations: 8b(PEAV), 7a(NEAV), 7b(NEAV)




Mean of OUTCOMES
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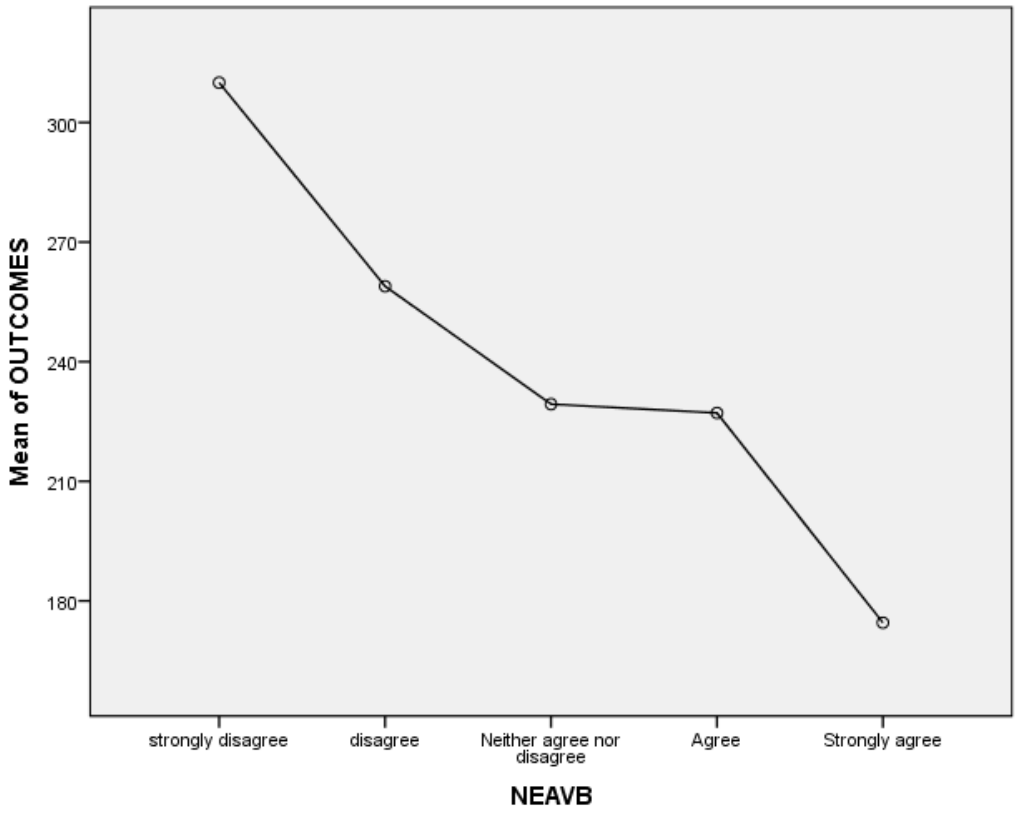
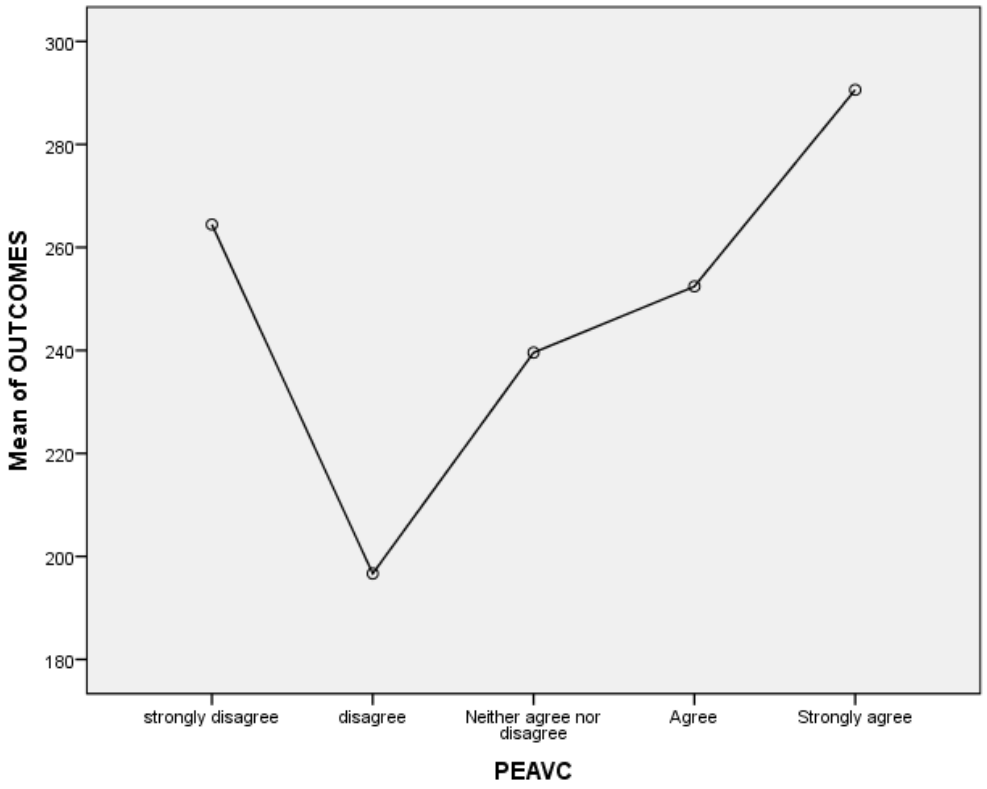
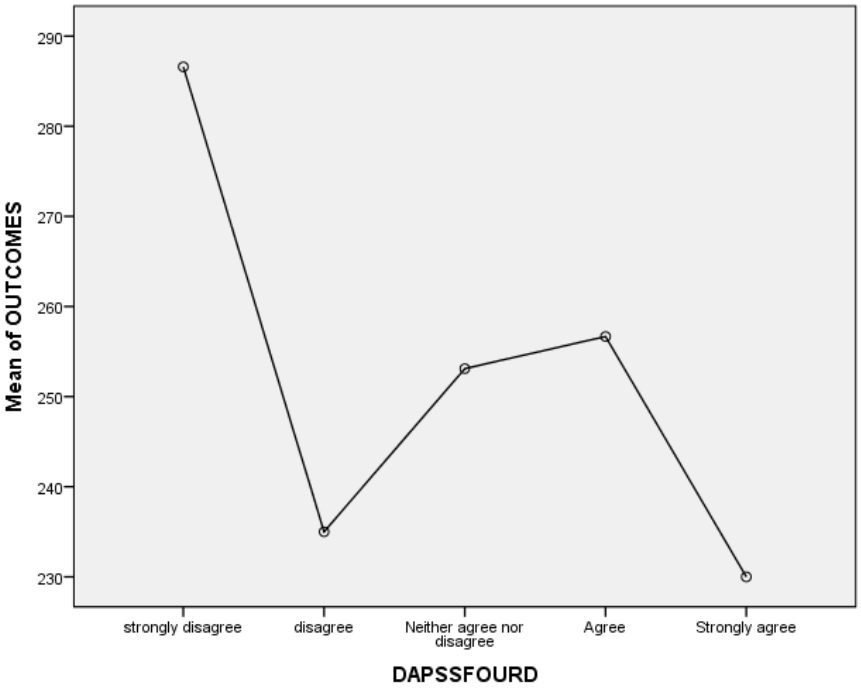
300
280
260
240
220
200
strongly disagree
disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
NEAVA

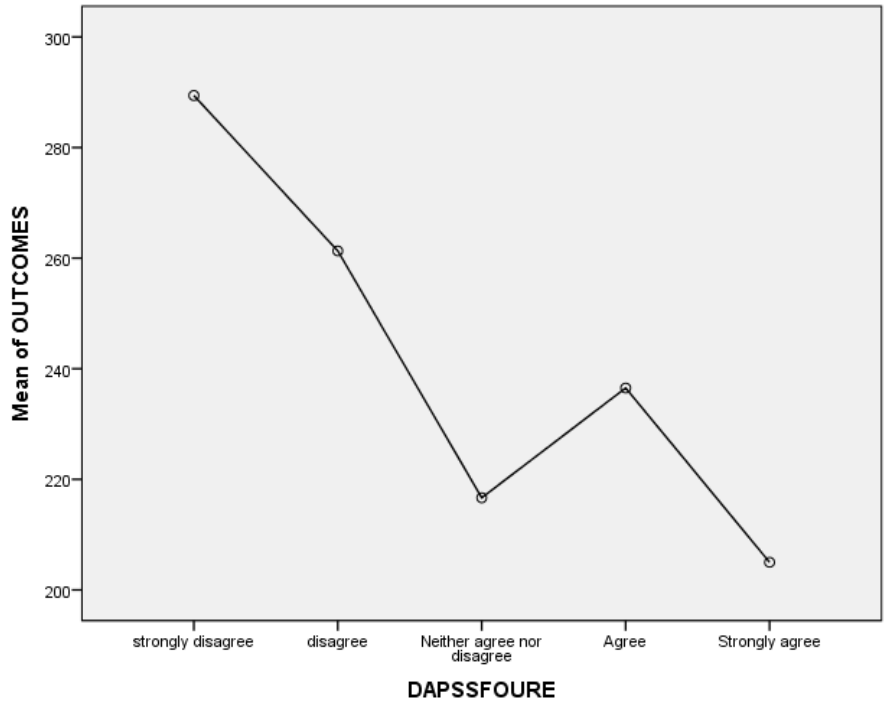

Mean of OUTCOMES
300
270
240
210
180
strongly disagree
disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
NEAVB

Aspirations 8c



DAPSS 4d, 4e, 4f, 4g




300
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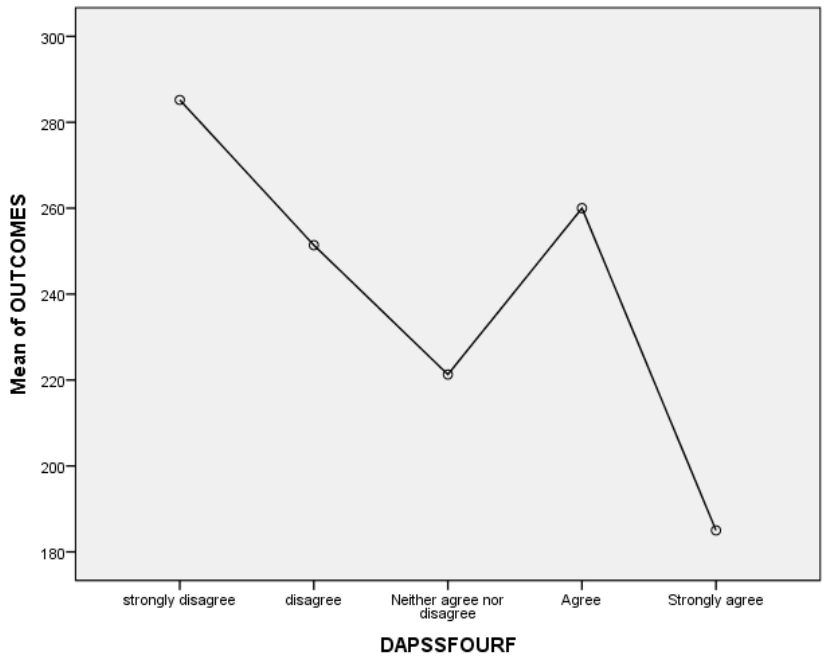
260
240
220
200
Mean of OUTCOMES
strongly disagree
disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
DAPSSFOURE


300
280
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240
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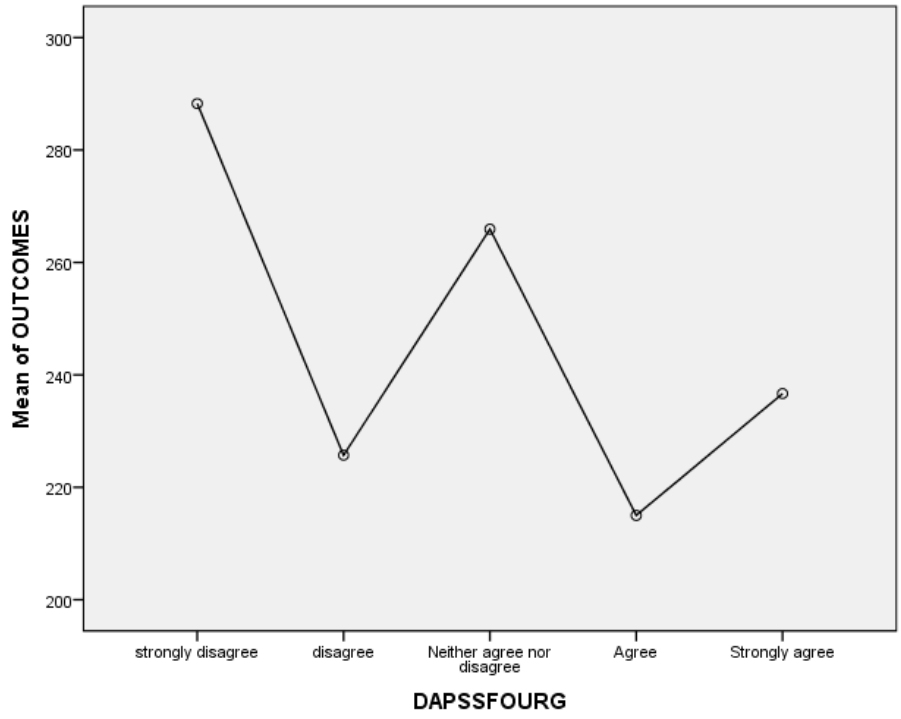
200
180
Mean of OUTCOMES
strongly disagree
disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
DAPSSFOURF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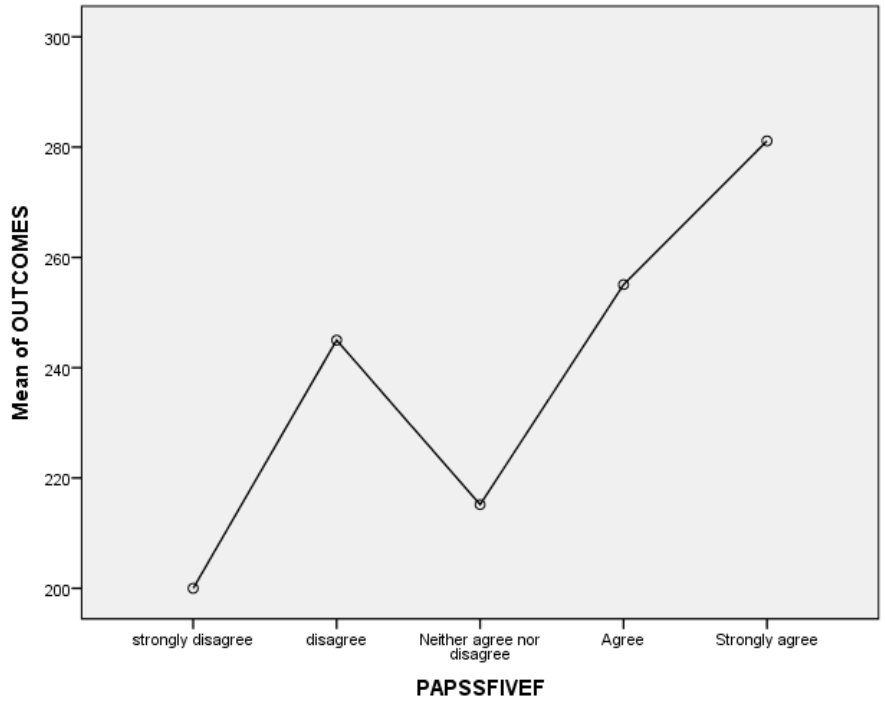
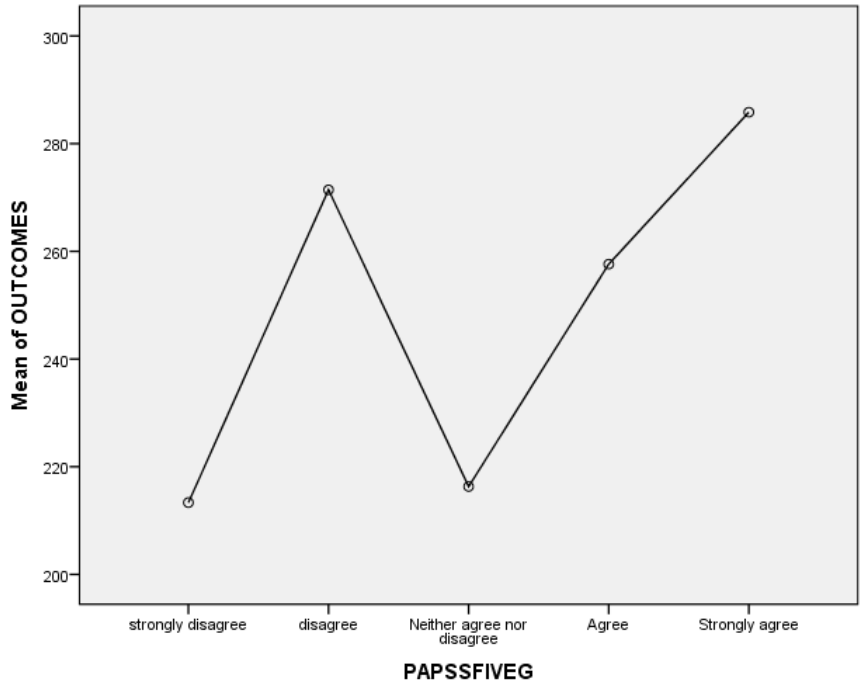
Mean of OUTCOMES
strongly disagree
disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
DAPSSFOURG

PAPSS 5f 5g


300
280
260
240
220
200
Mean of OUTCOMES
strongly disagree
disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree
PAPSSFIVEF



Attainment and non-significant values for RQ2

Age and ethnicity

Age: The Kruskal-Wallis H test identified that the distribution of outcomes is the same across all categories of age meaning that there is no significant difference between outcomes gained by each age group: $X^2(2) = 2.889$, $p = 0.577$

Ethnicity: The Kruskal-Wallis H test identified that the distribution of outcomes is the same across all categories of ethnicity meaning that there is no significant difference between outcomes gained by each ethnic group: $X^2(2) = 4.977$ $p = 0.29$

Expectations

A large majority of students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “My parents expect me to do well at college” but this was not significant in relation to attainment scores overall:

The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed a non-significant difference in attainment score and responses to this statement: $X^2(2) = 5.628$, P = 0.229.

Aspirations

The statement “My parents/carers do not have particular aspirations for what job I get” does not show a significant difference in outcomes:

$X^2(2) = 6.801$, p = 0.147

Marginally more students agreed rather than disagreed with the statement but the most common response for this statement was ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

Values:

There was no significant difference between student outcomes and the statement, “my parents /carers think it is important to get a good education”:

$X^2(2) = 1.002$, p = 0.91.

This may be due to a high majority (91%) of students either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

The statement, “My parents/carers do not think education is particularly important” was either disagreed or strongly disagreed by 91% of students who responded to this question and did not show a significant difference for outcomes:

$X^2(2) = 4.415$, p = 0.353.

DAPSS

There was no significant difference in the average scores between responses to the statement: 4a: “My parents/carers like to be in control of the amount and/or quality of college work that I do”:

$X^2(2) = 2.335$, $p = 0.674$

There was no significant difference in the average scores between responses to the statement: 4b: “I rely on my parents/carers to manage and help me with coursework”:

$X^2(2) = 4.227$, $p = 0.376$

There was no significant difference in the average scores between responses to the statement: 4c: “My parents/carers become involved in my college work even when I have asked them not to”:

$X^2(2) = 7.069$, $p = 0.132$

PAPSS

There was no significant difference in the average scores between responses to the following statements:

5a: “My parents/carers gently encourage me to complete my work for college”:

$X^2(2) = 1.185$, $p = 0.880$

5b: “If I am struggling, my parents/carers will try to guide me in my college work”:

$X^2(2) = 5.656$, $p = 0.226$

5c: “My parents/carers are willing to talk to me about college work, rather than getting involved with the essay writing”:

$X^2(2) = 7.955$, $p = 0.093$

5d: “My parents/carers believe that I know as much as them about how to get on with my work”:

$X^2(2) = 6.93$, $p = 0.14$

5e: “I choose when and how to do my college work”

$X^2(2) = 6.301$, $p = 0.178$

Students who report a change in the amount and/or type of involvement given by parents between primary school age and college age

There was no significant difference found between the outcomes of those students who reported reduced, increased and the same parental support between two points in time:

$X^2(2) = 2.468$, $p = 0.291$

Students who report a change in type or amount of involvement in response to student grades (outcomes)

There was no significant difference between outcomes for students who agreed that parents/carers would become more involved (via DAPSS behaviours) if they received a low grade and those who disagreed:

$X^2(2) = 1.793$, $p = 0.18$

Additionally, there was no significant difference between grades for students who agreed that parents/carers would have more trust in them (via PAPSS behaviours) if they received a high grade and those who disagreed with this:

$X^2(2) = 0.400$, $p = 0.527$

Students who report their ability to control the amount and type of involvement given by parents

There was no significant difference between grades for students who reported their ability to control either the amount of involvement or the type of involvement.

Amount: $X^2(2) = 1.91$, $p = 0.75$

Type: $X^2(2) = 4.46$, $p = 0.35$

Father and mother's academic achievements

There was no statistically significant difference in higher average grades for students who knew about their father's academic achievements and those who did not:

$U = 4{,}066$, $p = 0.569$

For mothers, there was no statistical significance between average student grades for those students who reported different levels of academic parental achievement:

$X^2(2) = 4.662$, $p = 0.588$

For fathers, there was no statistical significance between average grades for those students who reported differing qualifications:

$X^2(2) = 4.741$, $p = 0.577$

Parental income

There was no statistically significant difference in higher average grades for students who knew about their parents' income and those who did not:

Mothers: $U = 4{,}103.5$, $p = 0.258$

Fathers: $U = 3{,}799$, $p = 0.186$

For both mothers and fathers there was no significant statistical difference between average outcomes for those students reporting different levels of parental earnings:

Mothers: $X^2(2) = 6.741$, $p = 0.150$

Fathers: $X^2(2) = 5.265$, $p = 0.384$

Students who report parents to value formal qualifications (i.e. a BTEC course)

There was no significant difference between average student grades and responses to the statement:

“Formal qualifications are of value to my parents”: $X^2(2) = 7.776$, $p = 0.100$

Students who report parents to value BTEC level 3 more than traditional A. levels

There was no significant difference between average student grades and responses to the statement:

“My parents/carers value BTEC level 3 more than traditional A levels”: $X^2(2) = 6.77$, $p = 0.149$.

Additionally, 76 percent neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Students who strongly agree or strongly disagree that more involvement from parents/carers would result in higher grades

No significant difference was found between average student grades and the responses to the following statement:

““Having my parents/carers more involved with my college work would make me attain a higher grade”: X2(2) = 1.567, p =0.815

Appendix P: An excerpt of non-sig findings (RQ3)

Course recoded * NEAVA

Crosstab

			NEAVA					
			strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Course recoded	Care-based	Count	9a	14a	10a	6a	2a	41
		% within Course recoded	22.0%	34.1%	24.4%	14.6%	4.9%	100.0%
		% within NEAVA	25.0%	16.9%	14.7%	16.2%	14.3%	17.2%
		% of Total	3.8%	5.9%	4.2%	2.5%	0.8%	17.2%
	Science-based	Count	7a	26a	22a	13a	2a	70
		% within Course recoded	10.0%	37.1%	31.4%	18.6%	2.9%	100.0%
		% within NEAVA	19.4%	31.3%	32.4%	35.1%	14.3%	29.4%
		% of Total	2.9%	10.9%	9.2%	5.5%	0.8%	29.4%
	Commercial-based	Count	6a	11a	4a	1a	3a	25
		% within Course recoded	24.0%	44.0%	16.0%	4.0%	12.0%	100.0%
		% within NEAVA	16.7%	13.3%	5.9%	2.7%	21.4%	10.5%
		% of Total	2.5%	4.6%	1.7%	0.4%	1.3%	10.5%
	Physical	Count	5a	10a	15a	5a	2a	37
		% within Course recoded	13.5%	27.0%	40.5%	13.5%	5.4%	100.0%
		% within NEAVA	13.9%	12.0%	22.1%	13.5%	14.3%	15.5%
		% of Total	2.1%	4.2%	6.3%	2.1%	0.8%	15.5%
	Arts-based	Count	9a	22a	17a	12a	5a	65
		% within Course recoded	13.8%	33.8%	26.2%	18.5%	7.7%	100.0%
		% within NEAVA	25.0%	26.5%	25.0%	32.4%	35.7%	27.3%
		% of Total	3.8%	9.2%	7.1%	5.0%	2.1%	27.3%
Total		Count	36	83	68	37	14	238
		% within Course recoded	15.1%	34.9%	28.6%	15.5%	5.9%	100.0%
		% within NEAVA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	15.1%	34.9%	28.6%	15.5%	5.9%	100.0%

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of NEAVA categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.273[a]	16	.505
Likelihood Ratio	15.890	16	.461
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.030	1	.310
N of Valid Cases	238		

Gender * DAPSSFOURA

Crosstab

			DAPSSFOURA					
			strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Gender	Male	Count	30a	47a	50a	18a	2a	147
		% within Gender	20.4%	32.0%	34.0%	12.2%	1.4%	100.0%
		% within DAPSSFOURA	46.9%	68.1%	63.3%	75.0%	50.0%	61.3%
		% of Total	12.5%	19.6%	20.8%	7.5%	0.8%	61.3%
	Female	Count	33a	19a	28a, b	6a, b	2a, b	88
		% within Gender	37.5%	21.6%	31.8%	6.8%	2.3%	100.0%
		% within DAPSSFOURA	51.6%	27.5%	35.4%	25.0%	50.0%	36.7%
		% of Total	13.8%	7.9%	11.7%	2.5%	0.8%	36.7%
	Prefer not to say	Count	1a	3a	1a	0a	0a	5
		% within Gender	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within DAPSSFOURA	1.6%	4.3%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
		% of Total	0.4%	1.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
Total		Count	64	69	79	24	4	240
		% within Gender	26.7%	28.8%	32.9%	10.0%	1.7%	100.0%
		% within DAPSSFOURA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	26.7%	28.8%	32.9%	10.0%	1.7%	100.0%

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of DAPSSFOURA categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.745[a]	8	.121
Likelihood Ratio	12.901	8	.115
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.341	1	.037
N of Valid Cases	240		

Course recoded * PAPSSFIVEA

Crosstab

			PAPSSFIVEA					
			strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Course recoded	Care-based	Count	8a	3a, b	10a, b	13b	7a, b	41
		% within Course recoded	19.5%	7.3%	24.4%	31.7%	17.1%	100.0%
		% within PAPSSFIVEA	36.4%	15.8%	19.6%	12.0%	17.5%	17.1%
		% of Total	3.3%	1.3%	4.2%	5.4%	2.9%	17.1%
	Science-based	Count	5a	5a	12a	33a	15a	70
		% within Course recoded	7.1%	7.1%	17.1%	47.1%	21.4%	100.0%
		% within PAPSSFIVEA	22.7%	26.3%	23.5%	30.6%	37.5%	29.2%
		% of Total	2.1%	2.1%	5.0%	13.8%	6.3%	29.2%
	Commercial-based	Count	3a	2a	4a	13a	3a	25
		% within Course recoded	12.0%	8.0%	16.0%	52.0%	12.0%	100.0%
		% within PAPSSFIVEA	13.6%	10.5%	7.8%	12.0%	7.5%	10.4%
		% of Total	1.3%	0.8%	1.7%	5.4%	1.3%	10.4%
	Physical	Count	3a	4a	10a	16a	4a	37
		% within Course recoded	8.1%	10.8%	27.0%	43.2%	10.8%	100.0%
		% within PAPSSFIVEA	13.6%	21.1%	19.6%	14.8%	10.0%	15.4%
		% of Total	1.3%	1.7%	4.2%	6.7%	1.7%	15.4%
	Arts-based	Count	3a	5a	15a	33a	11a	67
		% within Course recoded	4.5%	7.5%	22.4%	49.3%	16.4%	100.0%
		% within PAPSSFIVEA	13.6%	26.3%	29.4%	30.6%	27.5%	27.9%
		% of Total	1.3%	2.1%	6.3%	13.8%	4.6%	27.9%
Total		Count	22	19	51	108	40	240
		% within Course recoded	9.2%	7.9%	21.3%	45.0%	16.7%	100.0%
		% within PAPSSFIVEA	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	9.2%	7.9%	21.3%	45.0%	16.7%	100.0%

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of PAPSSFIVEA categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.439[a]	16	.640
Likelihood Ratio	12.848	16	.684
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.133	1	.287